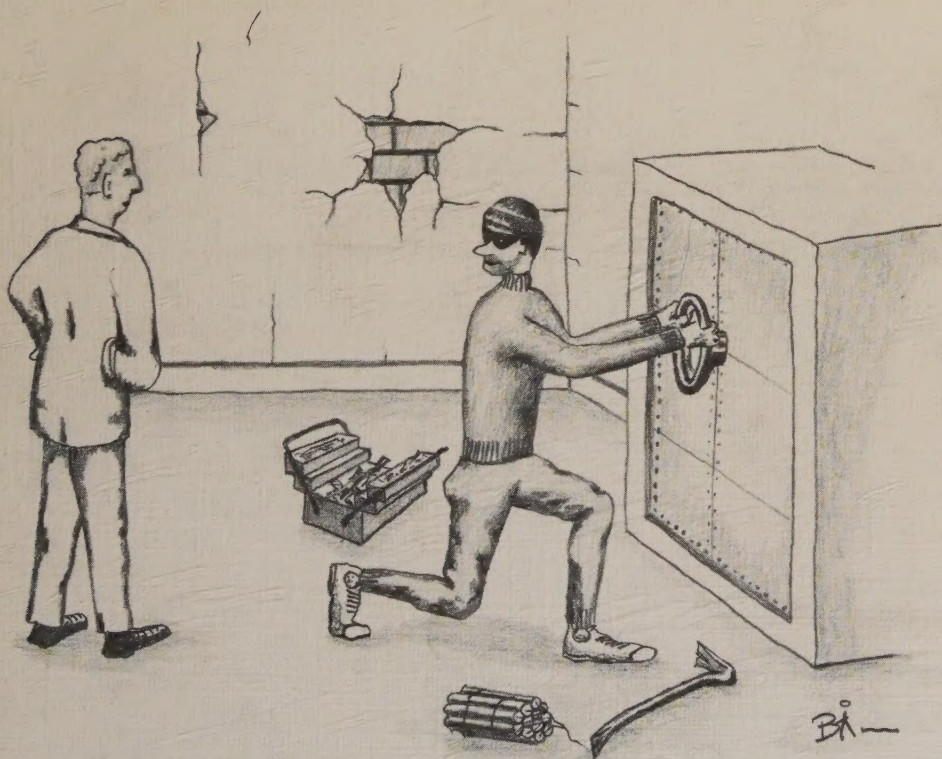


Lund 1983

CROOKS AND SQUARES

Lifestyles of Thieves and Addicts
in Comparison to Conventional People

Malin Åkerström



- HEY YOU!! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
- PRACTICING CREATIVE FINANCING.

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Martin Aarnhøj



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Lund 1983

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INTRODUCTION

Earlier studies of criminals dealt often with research concerning causality. Various traditions in criminology have tried to give explanations from different points of departure. In the late nineteenth century, the biological explanatory models dominated. A famous representative of this school was Lombroso, who argued that criminals were an atavistic type of human beings who were physically different from other people. Another school is the psychological one which sees criminal acts as symptoms of mental abnormalities, such as feeble-mindedness, ego-weakness or inadequate personalities. Today, crime is usually seen as a social phenomenon. The most well-known among the sociological explanations are the social disorganization theory, the differential association theory, the labelling theory, the sub-cultural theory and the social control theory. It is not my intention to deal with these theories here, as this lies beyond the scope of this work.¹

The present work follows the sociological tradition: it is not however as much an inquiry into the causes of crime or the processes involved in becoming a criminal as an analysis and description of some significant aspects of criminals' lives compared with other more conventional lifestyles. This has been achieved through in-depth interviews with thieves and addicts as well as through a questionnaire to both prison inmates and a sample of non-criminal people.

I have tried to describe criminals' - especially thieves' - outlook on the world and their actions as seen from their special work and life situation. This approach can be seen in the work of some of the scholars in the Chicago school, such as Nels Anderson in his description of the hobo, Donovan concerning salesladies and Paul Cressey for taxi-dance girls.

Several scholars (e.g. Maurer 1964; Shover 1971) have pointed out that we know relatively little of crime as a way of life. I think one can relatively safely state that as criminologists,

we have a lot of theories but few descriptions. Furthermore, these descriptions presented by the later subcultural scholars who studied gangs from a theoretical perspective treat more often situations but seldom outline details connected with the situations, as compared with the richer descriptions based on studies which had an empirical point of departure. In specific, the activities portrayed by the later subculturalists are not 'fun' - the easy-going street kid has been replaced by the bitter juvenile delinquent, often a victim of unfair circumstances. Another way of putting it is the following:

Thrasher's boys enjoyed themselves being chased by the police, shooting dice, skipping school, rolling drunks. - Cohen's boys and Cloward and Ohlin's boys are driven by grim economic and psychic necessity into rebellion. It seems peculiar that modern analysts have stopped assuming that 'evil' can be fun and see gang delinquency as arising only when boys are driven away from 'good'.. (Bordua 1961:136)

My goal here is what sociologists call a social reconstruction of a reality (Berger and Luckmann 1972) - or at least part of it - by describing the lives and attitudes of criminals by using the information from the participants' own experiences. A well-known criminologist, Matza (1969), has argued that we need this type of study, one made with an attitude of "appréciation", i.e. an attempt to consider the individual's world as it appears to him.

Most studies of deviant groups using this approach - studying crime as a way of life - are American; therefore, the possibility of making comparisons with corresponding Scandinavian research has been quite limited. The few Nordic studies of this type that have been published deal mainly with addicts, whereas my interest has mostly been in the attitudes and perspectives held by thieves.

The perspective I have used - the attempt to reconstruct the views and attitudes of others - is important to bear in mind while reading. It is thus not I who argue that crime can be viewed as work or who judge which issues are essential; this study is an interpretation which tries to reflect as closely

as possible the interviewees' opinions. The chapter on responsibility is a typical example, where the reader should remember that it is not the author but the interviewees who claim an individual responsibility for themselves.

Criminals are obviously influenced by social forces of different kinds, for example, that they have a higher percentage of parents who are unskilled workers (e.g. Jonson 1969; Olofson 1971) and a lower educational level than the average. In my opinion, however, this influence is not total. Their claim of individual responsibility is justified in part since all human beings in principle have the ability to make choices, albeit these choices are restricted by social position, differential association, labelling, etc. We can see this for example in the fact that most of them had tried different types of existences since they had quit crime and supported themselves through legal means, at times. They had thus varied experiences which is a necessary condition for choice to exist - the knowledge of different alternatives.

This "marginalism" which I see as rather typical for the respondents is one reason why I have not used the concept of subculture. The subcultural theorists tend to view the members of those cultures as accepting the norms in these subcultures and internalizing these norms and behavior patterns in a non-problematic way. Matza (1967), among others, has therefore criticized them for being too deterministic.

I have chosen therefore not to use the concept of subculture but the one of 'lifestyle' instead. Zetterberg (1977) emphasizes the significance of involvement for the practitioners of a lifestyle, and says that this involvement makes the individual invest his self in the cherished activity. He thus defines 'lifestyle' as a number of related actions or elements that the practitioners have in common and which they find to be particularly engaging.

It has been pointed out (e.g. Hauge 1971; Bondeson 1974) that the subcultural theorists have failed to describe these cultures

but instead emphasized the causes of their existence. Furthermore, the norms have been thoroughly discussed while tending to forget the activities. The lifestyle concept implies a greater concentration on description as well as the activities that keep the lifestyle going, whereas subcultural analysis has mostly dealt with the problem-solving functions of the culture. In today's society we can view different consumption patterns as important for the formation of a lifestyle. With this follows special knowledge concerning the consumption. If this reasoning is transmitted to criminal groups, we know for example how strongly centered addicts are around their drugs (cf. Short and Strodtbeck 1965). They discuss what contacts they have in the business, different drug experiences, different ways of using drugs, etc. These discussions, as I have experienced them, furthermore give an impression of status-measuring or verbal contest between the participants.

The subcultural approach has been criticized for a somewhat more passive type of learning, for example of different crime techniques. The lifestyle concept on the other hand adds a perspective in which the members actively try to learn and acquire knowledge since they have interests and investments to guard. The emphasis is on the best way of performing different activities, tips of a practical nature such as how to acquire for example the best drugs or safe-cracking materials, making contacts, etc. One should of course not overstate the differences between the concepts, as distinctions can overlap and 'subculture' can be used in the way describing 'lifestyle' above.

To sum up the discussion above, I think however that the concept of lifestyle is more fruitful when one tries to describe the attractions and activities in a way of living as well as explaining the marginal adherence of its 'followers' as opposed to an almost total commitment and belonging.

Another issue that is often discussed in criminological literature is whether criminals have different or similar values when compared to the rest of the population. Some sociologists assume that all groups in society strive towards the same goals and

since only some can reach these, an anomic situation occurs (Merton 1957). Deviant behavior arises from the blocking of opportunities for reaching these goals, but can lead to different types of adjustments. One form is to use illegal means (the innovators) and another to withdraw (the retreatists) from society if one fails to succeed (Merton 1957; Cloward and Ohlin 1960). A third form is described by Cohen. He pictures the lower class juveniles who engaged in delinquency as frustrated by their position in the social structure. The solution to their status problems was a type of subculture where the delinquency was described as non-utilitarian, malicious and negativistic.

It is interesting that even though the radical "new criminologists" (Young 1971; Taylor et al. 1973) criticize the subcultural tradition they themselves rely heavily on the anomie explanation - their deviants are not attracted by crime but forced into crime (Meier 1976).

Matza (1967) is another criminologist who argues that delinquents do not really differ from other groups. His argument for "normalizing" delinquents is however based on another perspective. He sees delinquents only as emphasizing subterranean values common in society, such as spending, thrills, etc. But as Bondeson (1974) has pointed out, activities of this type for conventional people are usually strictly regulated in terms of financial and time considerations - their reality is thus quite different. She has furthermore questioned Sykes and Matza's (1957) standpoint that juvenile delinquents do not have an ideology of their own but use different techniques of neutralization to justify their activities. Bondeson points out that it is difficult to see how it is possible to adhere to values in the dominant society while arguing that these have been made ineffective by different techniques of neutralization.

Bondeson has also indicated one possible explanation of these efforts to normalize the deviants: the reason might be to attempt to achieve a greater understanding and tolerance from the rest of society. Whatever the explanation, it is, as I see it, a quite absurd sociological thought that a group which lives

under special conditions would not have different values and behavior patterns.

The ethnographer Miller (1958) is an example of those scholars who, as opposed to those who have argued that criminals do not really differ from the rest of us, have illuminated the specific cultural traits of deviant subcultures. He argues against Cohen's description of the lower class standards as only a reverse function of middle class values. No cultural pattern can persist only by negative, hostile or rejective motives. Instead, Miller says, lower class culture is a generating milieu for gang delinquency. The culture is described by the following focal concerns: trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate and autonomy. Fatherless juveniles tend to exaggerate the importance of these concerns in order to be viewed as "men" and get themselves into trouble by committing crimes in order to achieve status among their friends. Miller also points out the importance of understanding cultural forces as they are perceived by the acting individual instead of viewing them from the reference point of another culture, which has mostly been the middle class perspective. It can be added that of the subcultural scholars cited here, Miller is the only one who bases his theory on empirical evidence of his own.

My own results support this type of cultural diversity explanation. The interviewees did not seem hostile or resentful towards the dominant strata but can be said to have different values in certain areas (see Chapter 8, for example). The thieves and addicts interviewed in this work did not constitute totally different cultures, or "alternative cultures" (Brake 1980), if one emphasizes the value component in the concept of culture. In some areas they were very different compared to the control samples but in other they were similar. Thieves for example were even more traditional than the non-criminal groups concerning attitudes to women and in arguing for individual responsibility.

Yet another issue in criminology concerns that of rationality.² In the present work the respondents are treated as rational, even if I do not make an explicit analysis of criminals as

rational actors. Much of the causality research on criminal actors has an underlying assumption of a billiard-ball theory, i.e. phenomena that are changed by different external forces. An alternative is to try to understand - from their point of view, given their values, goals and assumptions - why they do act in a certain manner. Doing this might lead to different issues. Instead of concentrating on their acts as deviants, one might find that it is their goals and values that are different. If they do make decisions that are supposed to lead to a certain goal, and with the given assumption about reality that they hold, they should not be seen as irrational. I am aware, however, of the fact that much in the criminal lifestyle inclines people to act irrationally, e.g. a level of drug consumption that leads them to commit acts they had not planned and regret later. One should in other words not overstate the theme of rationality among criminal actors. Furthermore, the concept is extremely complex. Take, for example, thieves or drug dealers who let a successful crime be known by bragging or squandering. They behave irrationally by drawing attention to themselves. On the other hand, since this is one of the few ways of demonstrating success that is available to them and given the fact that they do want to get respect and admiration from others and do not care too much if they get arrested, they are acting rationally.

The chosen topics

If this study had concerned sequences of criminal careers or had been set up to test a hypothesis, the ordering of the chapters would have been relatively easy. As my purpose is to gain a picture of the criminal lifestyle - especially where it can be seen as fruitful to criminological theory - there is no simple or logically given way of presenting my work. The chapters can rather be seen as articles on different topics. Some of these are chosen because they are often discussed in criminological literature. What I found interesting about them was that the respondents' answers were often quite contrary to common views in criminological texts. It is often claimed, for

example, that criminals deny responsibility for their being what they are (cf. Sykes and Matza 1957). Instead, they blame their upbringing, "bad" friends, etc. This does not seem to be the case, however, which is discussed in Chapter 4, "Thieves Claim Responsibility". Criminals have furthermore been seen as socially unskilled. I argue in Chapter 6, that many are just the opposite and that they need to be so in a variety of ways. The attitudes of the criminals ("crooks") towards the conventional people ("the squares") have also a significant and common theme in criminology. Crooks themselves, however, do not seem to be hostile or bitter towards ordinary people as has sometimes been argued, which is elaborated on in Chapter 8. In the first chapter, "Crime as Work", I wanted to nuance the picture of criminals as "professionals" and as learning through a well-prepared tutelage process.

Some scholars have viewed criminals as entrepreneurs as I have done in Chapter 3. Most, as Merton (1957) and Bell (1980), have however viewed illegal innovation as a way of getting into conventional society. As I see it, it seems to be a way to keep one's independence from society's efforts to regulate and assimilate individuals. Chapter 2, "Beating the System", is derived from the same reflections - criminals' strategies to avoid society's efforts to keep them in line, through for example rehabilitation attempts.

The way in which people view time and money (Chapters 5 and 6) has surprisingly rarely been explored in sociology or in criminology. When they are dealt with, there often seems to be half-hidden value judgments concerning criminals who are in a simplistic way described as hedonistically living in the present. (Chapter 5 has in slightly different form previously been published in *Acta Sociologica*, vol. 24, no. 3)

Finally, Chapter 9 deals with rewards in crime which I see as a neglected area in criminology. The present work stems to a large part from the discrepancy between my initial stereotype of criminals as gray, depressed individuals and the impressions I got when I interviewed and talked to them. I was actually

impressed by their self-confidence, resourcefulness and ability to describe their own situation - often in a humorous way. Due to this, as well as the rather obvious and much reported negative sides of their lives, I have not included a chapter on the dull, painful parts of their lives.

METHOD AND SAMPLES

This work is based upon three different empirical studies of male prison inmates who have committed crimes against property or drug laws. The first, (Persson 1977),* was made at the request of the Swedish Council of Crime Prevention, and concerned aspects of the illegal market. It consisted mainly of taped interviews with inmates and policemen. The second study (Persson 1978) consisted of some informal interviews as well as interviews through questionnaires. The one hundred and one inmates who answered the questionnaire were not divided into different groups as was those in my later study. The research topics dealt with attitudes towards drugs, different types of legal jobs, illegal ways of supporting oneself, opinions of the "square-johns" and about crime as a way of life for thieves and addicts respectively.

The third study was carried out in 1981, using the same methods as earlier. The questionnaire this time was, however, a bit more extensive, and I took more care in trying to get as many inmates as possible in nine different prisons to participate. Therefore, I enhanced the interview itself by announcing beforehand that all interviewees would be given coffee, cakes and cigarettes while filling in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the inmates at most prisons were permitted to do this during their work-hours without any reduction of their daily pay. The arrangements around the interview seemed to be quite effective, since very few of the inmates refused. The only ones who did not participate in eight of the prisons were either a few who refused or those who were sick at the time, had visitors or were on leave. At one prison (riksanstalten Malmö), I was not allowed to assemble the inmates for the interview. Therefore, I distributed the questionnaires and came back a few days later to collect them. When I came back, some said they had forgotten the whole thing, some had mislaid them, etc. About a fourth of those to whom I had given the questionnaire at Malmö prison did not return them. Furthermore, on one of the wards, all the inmates refused to fill it in. I had not been able to distribute

**All my previous publications have been made in my maiden name, Persson.*

the questionnaire myself on that particular ward. The prison guard who did it, handled it a bit clumsily: he told the inmates to line up, and more or less ordered them to take the questionnaire - which they refused. I managed, however, to make a deal with them by settling for taped interviews. This turned out to be better, in fact, because these inmates were all considered as "reliable guys" or "right guys" by other inmates. Most of them were Swedish thieves, and many belonged to what I have called the "traditional thieves" - the group I was most interested in. Thus, in these informal talks, I got a great deal more information, I think, than I would have gotten otherwise. The questionnaire study at Malmö prison, however, cost me about twenty thieves. One hundred and fifty inmates, from nine prisons, are included in the study, as well as some taped interviews with former thieves and addicts. Totally, fifty taped interviews were conducted.

In order to compare the answers from the inmates, I used two different non-criminal samples. First, I was kindly allowed by Professor Zetterberg to use his original data file for a nationwide study made by SIFO (The Swedish Institute of Public Opinion Research). I matched the respondents so that they were of the same age as the inmates and, of course, only men were selected. This sample is referred to as SIFO.

Furthermore, I collected a comparison group from a sample of white-collar and blue-collar male workers at a factory, Alfa-Laval, in Lund. I tried to match these with the inmates according to age, but they are, on the average, a bit older than the inmates. The blue-collar workers were mostly mechanics. The white-collar workers were engineers, economists or salesmen. With the support of the company management and the labor unions, the chosen interviewees were asked to fill out a questionnaire and mail it back to me. Considering the method used here, the amount who actually answered and sent back their questionnaires, 73%, must be seen as satisfactory. This group is referred to as "control group" in the tables and the text. The social category, age, status and education of the different groups are shown in Tables 1-4.

General characteristics of my data

My intention with this study has been to analyze some essential features in criminals' lifestyle outside prison. In order to accomplish this, I had to get access to a criminal group as well as a non-criminal group. Time, money and obvious research-technical reasons have, however, made it impossible to find groups that can somehow be seen as representative. My criminal group is, for example, characterized by their being imprisoned at the time of the study, which obviously implies an over-representation of criminals who get caught more often than a random sample of all criminals. Mack (1972) has shown that a group which he calls "the able criminals" spend less time in prison even though they make more money from their illegal activities. In a similar fashion, one can argue that employees at one factory need not be representative of "ordinary men".

I do believe, however, that the discussions and conclusions concerning similarities and differences between the groups would not have differed very much, had the groups been selected in a slightly different way from what was done.

The different criminal groups

On the basis of my previous experiences in earlier studies, I decided to differentiate the inmates according to the categories they used themselves: "thieves" and "addicts". These categories seemed more interesting than, for example, a differentiation based upon different offenses. Very few were specialized in only one type of criminal act, and there was a general agreement that one had to be a jack-of-all-trades today to make it. (See Chapter 1.)

To be a thief, then, does not mean only to support oneself by stealing. The concept was used by the inmates as meaning a criminal in a wider sense, as someone who supports himself by crime. Addicts were those who were into crime because of drugs.

If drugs were seen as their main motivation, they were labelled addicts whether they stole or not.

I found, however, that these groups were not sufficient when I tried to divide the respondents into those two broad categories since many fell in between the groups. I therefore constructed two more groups, "modern thieves" and "mixed".

At first, I tried to select a few items from the questionnaire and make the differentiation by computer-analysis. I soon discarded this method, as some of the respondents did not answer the key questions essential to making the divisions. Furthermore, given the human element of individuality, some of the inmates' answers could not be codified into previously-determined groupings, as "ideal types" often do not exist in reality. I therefore decided to do this work manually and on qualitative grounds. The main items I used were questions concerning their self-identity, if they were drawn into crime due to drugs or not, attitudes towards addicts, whom they preferred to associate with, their main reason for committing crime, and if they viewed their lifestyle in a positive or negative way. If I was still uncertain - some cases were of course difficult to place - I had additional help from remarks written in the margin or on the back of the questionnaire, and from other questions that I saw as clues to their identity.

Traditional thieves

This group consists of those who, more often than the others, described themselves as thieves or as criminals. They saw positive features in their lifestyle, and some described themselves as professional thieves who had chosen their way of living themselves. Fifteen of the forty-one who make up this group stated that they had never tried drugs. Even those who had tried - a few had even been addicted - held, all the same, very negative opinions towards addicts. This group is a bit older than the others, and more of them were interviewed at Malmö prison, which, compared to the other institutions in this study, has more recidivists and more inmates with long sentences.

Modern thieves

This category consists of people who have described themselves as thieves, or stated that they are thieves and drug users. This group is not negative towards addicts. Only two of the fifty who belong to this group stated that they had never tried drugs. Thirty of them had tried three or more different types of drugs. They associate with addicts as well as with thieves. Their own addiction, however, was not given as the primary cause for their criminality. Crime or drug-dealing was often seen as a business enterprise by this group. One respondent said for example, "My granddad was a horse dealer, my dad, a car dealer, and I, myself, am a drug dealer". It can be added that he supplemented his income with thefts of various kinds. This group is younger than the rest. Maybe these are tomorrow's typical "thief" who is engaged in thefts as well as drug-dealing (assuming that this will continue to be a lucrative business).

Mixed

This group seems to resemble the "disorganized criminal", as described by Gibbons, Roebuck and Johnson, and Irwin. They do not, as the previous group, find the same attractions in a life of crime, and they are not as committed to such a life as criminals like those above. They do not speak about having chosen their life, and seem to look at themselves as losers. Only one of the twenty-one who belong to this category had not tried drugs. Fifteen have tried three or more different types of drugs. They do not, however, identify themselves as addicts, but as people who are drug users and thieves because of personal problems.

Addicts

The nineteen in this group that I have called "addicts" have all stated that they have been or are addicted to drugs (it should be remembered that they are presently in prison, there-

fore the "have been"). Thirteen of them have used many types of drugs, while two used only heroin, two, amphetamine, and one, hasch. The latter would in the US have been described rather as a "pot head", not an addict. The basis for my categorization here is the fact that all of them stated that they had stolen or that they were imprisoned due to drugs. They see their addiction per se as the reason for their criminality; several of them stated that if drugs had been legal, they would not have been in prison. Some also argued that they were not "really criminals". Their description of themselves was "addict", "drug user", or something else like "an artist of life" or "seeker of the truth". They preferred to associate and did associate with addicts or drug users rather than with thieves.

In addition to the respondents categorized as above, there were some that I put in an "other" group. They were all special in some way: some had converted to religious beliefs in prison that made them deviate from the others. There were also some forgers from a more middle-class background than the rest. Since they had committed crimes against property, I did not sort them out entirely.

Problems in interviewing

In a study of this kind, it is of obvious importance how the interviewer-researcher is looked upon by the respondents. I tried to present myself as a researcher first, but also as an outsider who was interested in being taught by the respondents about their lives - an area where they were the experts, and I, the pupil (See Agar 1980). At the same time, I tried to avoid being "too hip", something which Irwin (1972) has warned students of deviants against. I would rather put myself in the role of the dumb, "not-in-the-know" outsider, and in this manner get information and statements about problems or issues where I was insecure of my knowledge. Further, this approach gives the respondent somewhat of an upper-hand during the interview, which allows him to feel that his information is interesting and valuable.

Another important issue is where the interviews are carried out. Polsky has argued that in order to get an accurate picture when studying criminals, one has to use participant observation. To study them in institutions is said to be comparable to studying animals in cages. Apart from this not being practically possible, there are actually advantages in doing interviews in prison. As Agar (1980) has pointed out when comparing a study he did with addicts at a treatment home and addicts in the street, the former informants were better in the way that the respondents at the institutions had more time to reflect and think about the questions. The addicts in the streets were difficult to talk to because their attention was elsewhere, revolving around their present and/or future deals and businesses, they were difficult to "catch and keep" long enough to be interviewed, and in addition, they were often high on drugs. To live with them and do real participant observation was often not allowed since by nature their activities were secret and they wanted to protect themselves. This problem is something I undoubtedly would have encountered. Thus, although Agar is an anthropologist he argues for interviews when studying addicts.

Shover (1972) has interviewed inmates and read autobiographies and biographies of thieves for his dissertation on burglary as work. Later he interviewed some criminals out of prison to check his previous information. He concludes that this did not give him any further information.

Generally, I think the bias of the environment of prison would be less in this type of study - analyzing the lifestyle, work, etc. - than if one were asking inmates about prison-related areas such as attitudes towards punishment and treatment-oriented problems.

Table 1. Social category according to the Central Bureau of Statistics' "socio-economic division", 1980 (their categories 3+4 (lower positioned white-collar workers) and 6+7 (higher positioned white-collar workers) are added together, however)

<u>FATHER'S SOCIAL GROUP</u>									
%		Non-vocationally trained worker	Vocationally trained worker	White-collar worker			Own firm	Farmer	No answer
				lower	middle	higher			
Inmates	31	21	7	6	4	14	3	15	100 (150)
Blue-collar worker	20	24	7	18	7	5	13	7	100 (105)
White-collar worker	11	24	11	20	11	5	15	2	100 (93)
<u>MOTHER'S SOCIAL GROUP</u>									
Inmates	33	7	9	9	1	2	23	17	100 (150)
Blue-collar worker	20	5	12	8	2	2	44	8	100 (105)
White-collar worker	19	3	9	13	2	2	48	3	100 (93)

Note: The Mother's social group is the same as the Father's with the exception of Farmer, for which we have substituted Housewife, as no one listed his mother as being a farmer by herself.

Table 2. Age

%	17-24	25-34	35-	Sum	N
Inmates	42	39	19	100	(150)
Control group	28	54	18	100	(198)

Table 3. Status

%	Married/ cohabiting	Girlfriend	Divorced	Single	No answer
Inmates	21	31	17	29	3
Control group	56	14	4	26	-

Table 4. Education

%	Primary school	Vocational school or 2-year secondary school	Other	University
Inmates	50	26	23	-
Blue-collar workers	11	47	39	3
White-collar workers	1	10	37	53

1. ASPECTS OF CRIME AS WORK

Several criminologists have analyzed crime as work. Sutherland portrayed in a classical book, *The Professional Thief* (1937), the life and work of professional thieves and con men. Maurer, a linguistic scholar, concentrated on con men in *The Big Con* (1940) and *The Whiz Mob* (1955). Polsky (1969) wrote about pool hustlers and their work situation and pointed at that time to the lack of analysis following in the tradition of Sutherland's study, as research had been concentrated around the causes of crime. Lately, however, the older tradition has returned to favor. Klockars has made an excellent study of *The Professional Fence* (1975), Shover (1971) studied "good burglars" in his dissertation *Burglary as an Occupation* and Letkemann concentrated on work methods of robbers and safe-crackers in *Crime as Work* (1973). Finally, I would like to mention Prus and Sharper's account of the careers of professional card and dice hustlers in *Road Hustler* (1977).

Common for all these studies is that they emphasize how criminals live and work instead of why criminals are what they are. This perspective allows them to avoid grand theories and half-hidden value judgements.¹ Analyzing crime as work seems to imply a more nuanced description and understanding of the life and work of different criminal groups.

I am not going to give a detailed account of crime as work in the common terms of career processes, work methods, etc., here. Instead I will briefly examine whether the criminals themselves tend to look at their activities as work. Furthermore, I will discuss some of the special skills and problems that the interviewees themselves indicated were connected with supporting oneself on crime. Thereafter it will be argued that earning one's income through illegal means demands a lot of individual initiative and creativity. This is partly due to the stated need to be a jack-of-all-trades. As a result of this, a kind of "survivor mentality" emerges with an accompanying pride in getting by. Finally, it is concluded that the skills and time used in making

necessary connections and so on can be seen as an investment by the criminals as in any other type of work.

1.1. Crime as work?

The interviewees define their way of supporting themselves as both work and non-work. They regard it as work in the sense that it does involve skills, physical activities and strain but at the same time, they do not define crime as "an occupation".

"Crime as work?"

"Yeah, I guess you could look at it that way ... I hope no worker will listen to this." (laughter)

Furthermore, they often pointed out that the whole meaning of being a criminal was to avoid "work".

Miller, in the article "Nonoccupational Work", discusses the differentiation between work and occupation in the following way:

Work is defined as the various ways in which human beings attain their livelihoods ... Occupation is a unique type of work role based on two factors: (1) its existence as a role discrete and separate from the other roles occupied by the individual, and (2) the primary use of such direct financial rewards as salaries or wages to obtain a minimal level of involvement in the role by the worker. (1980:382)

He uses the housewife and the members of Hare Krishna as examples of people doing work but not having an occupation. I think criminals' ways of supporting themselves illegally can be looked at in the same way. They themselves seem to define it somehow along this line. Although the respondents seldom talked about thievery as an occupation, they referred to break-ins as "jobs" or that they "went working". Thus, no one opposed the use of the word "job" in the following statement. "If you are going to be a good thief, you will have to become skillful at it as in any kind of job". About two-thirds of the thieves agreed, and slightly more than half of the addicts, who seem for the most part to

respect the skills of a good burglar. About half of the mixed group stated that they did not have any opinion, and only one-third agreed, which fits the view of these not having as much commitment to crime as a lifestyle or as a job alternative.

An example of how stealing can be seen as work. A "modern thief" referred to this in the following casual way:

When you didn't have money for drugs you'd usually go out after two at night and work [steal]. Between two and six I used to steal and after that go down to the fence with my stuff.

He also claimed that he was too lazy "to work" but corrected himself immediately:

Well, it's not really laziness because you work twice as much as other people. Take, for example, driving a car for 24 hours: you have to drive carefully so that nothing will happen. So you do work. It's not that kind of laziness, but you want to do something for yourself.

The "easy buck" is thus not all that easy. But the costs, with all the strain and struggle of being a criminal, seem to be worth the price for independence.

It should be added that the respondents in the taped interviews very rarely mentioned specialized mechanical skills² as an important factor in supporting oneself by crime. Instead they pointed out some special conditions of this type of work such as that it involves a lot of strain and demands "nerve" and coolness from the actor.

1.2. Strain

Since many had talked about crime requiring a lot of effort and that it was "hard work" both in a physical and psychological sense, I posed the following statement in the questionnaire: "It requires more hard work to support oneself as a thief than by ordinary work". Here, it is mostly those who have experience in this who agree, half of the thieves, compared to only a third

of the mixed and addicts. A statement like "There is no tougher work than being a thief" implies both having to work under extremely uncertain conditions with an unsure outcome and with rather unreliable partners as well as the prospect of being arrested. So why do they continue? The answer seems to be that they view the alternative (of ordinary work) as being worse.³

1.3. The importance of having "nerve"

One could expect that craftsmanship would be considered important but having "guts" was actually seen as a more vital factor. Some even meant that this was something you had to be born with. "Most people could never take it", i.e., the strain of keeping cool during precarious situations (see also Chapter 8). This aspect was also important in choosing associates since someone who was scared could not be trusted.

There are some guys who're scared and I tell 'em: if you can't take it, tell me now, it's worse later - then it might be too late. And a guy like that who can't keep his nerve, he'll put me in a spot, not only himself, you know.

However, as Shover (1971) and West (1974) have pointed out, too much nerve can also be bad since it can lead to carelessness. A combination of having nerve and being cool is thus the ideal. A safe-cracker states that now, after several years of criminal life, he is never afraid:

You learn how to master both your nerves and your feelings, to think coldly. A person who loses his cool, he's totally unpredictable and could do absolutely anything. But someone who's calm and doesn't think too much but just does what he's doing at the moment, he can react afterwards and he's much more effective.

Shover also points out the fact that losing nerve can sometimes be the reason for quitting at least those criminal activities where courage is needed. Some of my respondents also mentioned that some burglars they knew had quit because of this. One former thief said that though he had no scruples about committing

a crime, he would be too scared nowadays to do so.

Even though taking drugs before committing a crime was not recommended (those who considered themselves good did not use drugs before their jobs), quite a few used either narcotics or alcohol in order to get the needed confidence or "nerve". Only one out of four stated that he had not used anything. Of those who were influenced by drugs, and who commented on why they had used them, some gave answers like "in order to stay calm". This is of course contrary to those who take drugs for no special criminal purpose and then, "after you take something, you do stupid things".

One can conclude that since nerve is such an important aspect, it will lead at least some criminals to use drugs before they commit crimes.

1.4. Coolness

Coolness is related to the need to have nerve. Coolness is not only required, it is also a valued trait. "Someone who is calm and cool in all situations" was the most common answer (31% mentioned this) to the question "Who is especially appreciated and respected outside the joint by other criminals?"⁴

Another important facet of thievery is "coolness". Coolness has two dimensions. First is the ability to keep one's composure in the face of difficulties encountered on capers ... Second, coolness is involved in the day-to-day living of the thief. The good thief lives in an unobtrusive manner, careful not to draw unwanted attention and "heat". (Irwin 1970:9-10)

The demand for coolness, at least in certain situations, seems to "win" over the demand for loyalty in the in-group. A liquor-store owner in one of the rougher areas of San Francisco told me about a man who had been stupid enough to try to break into a police car. Soon afterwards another man in the area came in, a known drug dealer, and told the store-owner who had done it. Bill, the owner, promised not to reveal who the "snitcher" was.

When the police came to the store to ask him if he knew anything about the attempted break-in, Bill passed on the information, while being assured in his turn that the source of information would not be revealed. When I asked him why the first man had told him, Bill responded, "The guys down here thought it was a stupid thing to do, they don't want any heat down here."

Many thieves at one time or another have to trust people they do not know by reputation or recommendation. Coolness is an important characteristic to have for all the people concerned:

You see there aren't many that do big operations like the ones I go for and I don't blame them if they get scared. But I always tell them to tell me beforehand, see ... Imagine working with a safe and then the guy outside just runs as soon as someone shows up, you have to have someone reliable to warn you and it ain't easy ...

Coolness is not only a tool; it is also a state-of-being, one which can be enjoyed for its own sake, even if foolheartedly. This state is often enhanced through drugs. One former addict told me that when high on heroin, he loved flirting with danger:

The good thing about heroin, you see, is that it makes you so cool. You can walk into, say, a jewelry store in the middle of the day and steal right in front of them and then you walk away before they have time to call the police ... It's great ...

1.5. Practical knowledge

A more general comment on crime as work is that criminals do need a lot of practical knowledge: how to break into a house or a store, how to handle people, how to judge people - whom to sell to, for example. If selling, they have to know what they are dealing with in order not to sell white gold as silver, for example.⁵ A drug dealer, for his own sake, should be personally acquainted with the drugs he sells. There is no Governmental Department for Consumer Affairs, no Consumer Ombuds-

men, to turn to if one is cheated.⁶ Not only criminal techniques are important but also knowing the argot of the group, knowing important people to refer to (of well-known importance for new inmates in prisons), and so on.

Two of the famous British train robbers who successfully fled to Mexico had problems with their high cost of living and discussed taking up their old profession again, "... but they concluded quite quickly that without criminal contacts or a good knowledge of the language it would be futile." (Read 1979:257)

Practical knowledge as referred to here does not only apply to knowledge about things, language, etc. but also to knowledge about people. The lack of traditional sources of information such as grades, employment certificates, company magazines, etc., makes it very important in the criminal world to acquire personal knowledge about people. The grapevine is said to travel fast in these circles:

"You know rather a lot about each other in this world?"
"Yeah, before you do business, you get information on guys. And then you hear you should avoid him and him, it travels fast. This is big business, where there's a hundred thousand or more."
"Is money the most important?"
"Yeah, and respect, if you don't get caught, for example."

The need to acquire information and the lack of formal channels are two reasons for hanging out at bars, hoping to learn something: quite time-consuming, but necessary in their world.

There is thus a need for a lot of individual decision-making, judgement and knowledge about a wide range of things. This makes this world quite different from the one of ordinary people, where in our Western society, due to the specialization in the division of labor, we have economized on knowledge and need not, to the same extent, duplicate it.

Sowell (1980) has pointed out that knowledge today is often associated with a theoretical and reasoning skill. He therefore wants to emphasize the existence and importance of "authentic-

tion of knowledge", i.e. the ability to implement in a practical way a project or a task, not just theoretically knowing how. Sowell notes that the lower strata of society, however, need comparatively more practical knowledge than other groups in order to make it in the world.

... the degree of authentication of knowledge may be lower in the "higher" intellectual levels and much higher in those areas which intellectuals choose to regard as "lower". (1980:9)

1.6. Crime as creativity and active work

Contrary to the picture of thieves and addicts leading more or less passive lives due to circumstances which they have found themselves in, their lifestyle require a lot of inventiveness and active work.

1.6.1. Jack-of-all-trades

Several authors have noted a decline in the specialization of professional criminals (Miller 1978; Gould 1968). This is due to increased technical difficulties, better safes, non-cash money transfers, etc. McIntosh (1971), however, sees this as leading to a new type of crime for some criminals: project crimes with much planning and investment beforehand and where the stakes are high, instead of what she called craft-crimes that, for example, safe-crackers were involved in before.

As Gould (1968) has noted, it is very difficult to know whether specialization by criminals has changed or not. He made a study among full-time male criminals where one of the aims was to update Sutherland's work on professional thieves. The author concludes however that even among those who call themselves professionals, there is little specialization and a lot of hustling. Hustling refers to constantly being on the outlook for every opportunity, for example moving around bars and finding out "what's up", and "connecting" with other individuals for

fencing, burglary, drug deals, etc. Thus, it does not imply planning for one project in a long-term way. My results confirm this need to constantly be on the outlook for "angles to make a buck".

One man, who had made his living as a small-time fence, a seller of information (who has drugs, stolen goods, who the big fences are, etc.) made the following rather typical comment:

"You can't live on thieving, you have to combine it with being a businessman, sort of."

"Is everyone doing that?"

"Yeah, I think so, ya gotta cut your coat according to your cloth, in that case ... Thieves committing perfect crimes, as they say, that's something I don't believe in. Maybe in the old days when they went out on a bike and blew safes, but the times have changed ..."

It thus seems necessary to be a "jack-of-all-trades" (Roebuck and Johnson 1962).⁷ This tendency might be more pronounced today but it probably existed before. It is at least the impression one gets from reading older biographies of criminals. This is, for example, an account from thirty years ago:

So you see, there was a lot of ways to make a dollar ... A lot of people think that once a stickup man, always a stickup man. Well, you can't run around stickin' up people every day of the week like a workin' man. (Martin 1952:117)

Due to practical considerations as above, financial restrictions, new opportunities, etc., there is a need to find an income from sources other than that which is seen as one's speciality. I think this is the cause for the difference in the result below, asking the respondents first if they had committed many types of crime or if they mainly specialized and what they thought others did.

Table 5.

%	I do	Others do
Many types of crime	40	89
Specialized	60	11
N	(117)	(132)

Note: Twenty percent of those who saw themselves as specialized mentioned more than one of the given alternatives (stealing, robbery, fraud, drug dealing and fencing).

The result reflects, I think, both a feeling that one has a speciality (even if one has to do other things to support oneself) and also that this is a form of identity. At the same time they see others do a lot of different things in order to get by financially. However, the result does not seem to indicate, as one could believe, that claiming a specialization is a matter of status-seeking. Three-fourths of the respondents denied in answer to another question that being specialized was something that gave criminal status and respect. Summing up, the reality is, I am sure, that most criminals "do a bit of this and a bit of that". Quite a few consequently referred to themselves as "jack-of-all-trades".

Even though criminals might not be strictly specialized, most have, as Letkemann's (1973) interviews with forty-seven property offenders indicates, "a line". Thus, Holzman (1979), who has studied criminal careers of persistent burglars and robbers, concludes that burglars do not rob and robbers do not commit burglary. They thus have a sort of specialization. At the same time their criminal activities seem to follow a secondary rather than a primary employment. The author describes the subjects as "moonshining in crime". Of those interviewed in this study, 36% stated that their primary income source was legal occupations, while 39% stated 'thievery', 15% 'drug dealing', 4% 'fencing' and 3% 'forgery'.⁸

1.6.2. The element of creativity in criminal work

I was often impressed with the creativity the respondents showed in supporting themselves. Both Shover (1971) and Letkemann (1973) have noted the ability of property criminals to view everyday surroundings - buildings, situations - in the light of crime potential. Lofland sees this ability among criminals for recombining elements as a sort of creativity and a kind of innovation:

The more conventional sort of creativity and the present type also occur under similar circumstances: a stressful situation which demands a reconceiving of the cognitive field in order to achieve a solution ... And, as with other discoveries of new possibilities for action or meaning, once they are known, others are likely to say, "it is so obvious" or "it was so easy". (1969:73)

The way thieves come to learn their job has often been described as a tutelage process, i.e., older or more skilled thieves train their younger or less skilled companions.⁹ This view should, I think, be nuanced in two ways. Firstly, it implied an uncomplicated or almost automatic recruitment process. However, a good deal of effort might have to be put in by the prospective criminal if he wants to be accepted as an apprentice. The aspiring thief might act like this:

"How did you learn to be a safe-cracker?"

"Well, the theoretical part I picked up in jail. You listen to the older guys until your ears are ready to pop off. Then you become buddies, latch on to some clever guy - you picked out someone you thought was the best. And when ya got out, maybe ya waited for 'em - I remember I did. I worked on the docks and lived at home with my mother, lay low for a while ... In any case, we had a plan ... and then ya gotta go out and do the job under his supervision." (laughter) "That's how you got training."

Prus and Sharper (1977), in their study of card hustlers, have also emphasized the active part the recruit has to play in the tutelage process.

Secondly, criminals often seem to be forced to come up with new types of crimes or learn the old ways themselves. Martin in the

biography *My Life in Crime*:

Lots of the things I've sat down and figured out myself, they may not have been original, probably somebody been doing them since the beginning of time, but nobody ever told me about them ... (1952:189)

McIntosh (1971) has remarked that most crimes described in autobiographies of criminals are similar to each other (even if they seem unique) in that there is a pattern reflecting different cultures and periods. Naturally, one does learn from each other and is restricted by the external environment (it is obviously impossible to be a safe-cracker if there are no such things as safes). At the same time many of my respondents told with much pride of different ways they had managed to earn money: they were proud because they themselves saw their activities as original. Criminals are perhaps a bit in the same boat as the Russian living on the isolated countryside, who supposedly invented the bicycle fifty years after it was out on the market.

Criminals not only learn from each other and repeat the same type of crimes, but also branch out on their own. The tutelage process breaks down for example when criminals do not want to reveal their tricks to others. And since some methods might attract too much police attention, there is a need to develop new techniques.¹⁰ Today, there might be a greater need for individual inventiveness when criminals are not brought up in particularly criminal neighborhoods (where skills are picked up and contacts made) - at least not in Sweden. Thrasher's study of "the gang" from the twenties describes a taken-for-granted reality of crime. The experiences of the gangland boys then differs quite a lot from those of the persons interviewed in this study.

Most adolescent gangs have an intimate knowledge of the doings of the underworld ... The gang boy sees lawlessness everywhere and in the absence of effective definitions to the contrary accepts it without criticism. He soon learns where to buy stills, skeleton keys, and guns, which are sold to minors with impunity, either by mail or by dealers who have them on open display. The

presence of junk dealers and "fences" encourages stealing.
(1966:186)

The sociologist Prus and the card hustler Sharper (1977) have analyzed the hustler's way of living. They point out that the established hustlers are usually not open or friendly towards newcomers. The latter have to prove themselves. I think this is quite general in the criminal world. The inhabitants can not afford someone who draws heat to the group (gets in trouble), someone who talks too much, etc. Even if the tightly-knit groups of card hustlers, who need to spread their knowledge, there is always a certain competition, a trying out and a possibility that someone will leave the group taking his acquired knowledge with him. This makes the tutelage process one of "learn as you go", instead of an open diffusion of knowledge. Below, a card hustler on how he 'learnt the ropes':

You see them hemming and hawing and stalling around. You wonder what they are doing, so you watch and see what's going on. Now, once you find out on your own, then they open up to you. But it's not like they're going to say "Well, this is what we're going to do ..." They don't do that - it's basically learn as you go. And, the more you learn, the more your status goes up. (1977:58)

Furthermore, the tutelage process is sometimes hindered since not instructing others can be functional, as the others then cannot rat on you. A comment from a study of thieves and problems of selling stolen goods:

Information as to the origin and destination of goods is cut off so that the distribution of knowledge is minimized even among colleagues. (West 1974:247)

1.6.3. Making connections

Having contacts is essential to the criminal in several ways, both for his criminal pursuits and in his overall living circumstances. Contrary to the picture of young addicts being dragged into drug-using social circles, they have to work to gain access to these groups.

This organization\ the world of young drug users operates as a selective device, indicating the kind of youngsters who will be accepted at one point or another and by the same token, the kind of person who will be denied access to drugs. (Blumer et al. 1967:48)

Even if you are known in an area, it is not easy to buy from someone in the street. You must show yourself as trustworthy. In Pryce's study of West Indian lifestyles in England, one group is labelled "inbetweeners" - those in between the law-abiders and the hustlers. If someone from this group wants to get hold of marijuana, he has to get acquainted with the hustler group:

Of course, procuring marijuana is not just simply a matter of exchanging cash for the stuff. In order to obtain "a smoke" in Shanty Town, the inbetweeners, not being a hustler himself, must become affiliated with hustlers, learn their values and norms, and become acquainted with the dealers. (1979:248)

To reach the higher echelons in the drug-dealing world is of course even more difficult. Consider, for example, the difficulties in making contact with this described dealer:

The most secretive tactic is to avoid meeting any new people. One dealer, in the business for a dozen years, refuses to go anywhere he might encounter someone unknown. He will sit outside in his car rather than chance seeing someone who does not know him. (Adler and Adler 1980:454)

The problem of conflicting interests between openness and secrecy in the criminal world is even shown in the area of prostitution. According to Prus and Vassilikopoulos (1979), who have studied street-walkers, it is not even self-evident that every customer with money "scores". Even in this context, there is thus not always the easy access that is often assumed.

This characteristic of "closedness" is one of the main problems that the aspiring burglar confronts, when trying to gain access to rather closed social circles.

If the fledgling burglar is to progress and become proficient and successful in his endeavors, he must gain entrance into a closed social circle. He must establish relationships with those kinds of people who can teach him and assist him in coping with the problems endemic to burglary. (Shover 1972:542)

Thieves and hustlers have to be careful in how they select their associates, whom they tell things to, whom they sell to, etc. (See further Chapter 6.)

Since buyers of stolen goods do not advertise openly and since having a fence is often a prerequisite to stealing, it is highly important to acquire one. This information is not always easily attained:

"Do thieves sell to each other?"

"Yeah, sure, there's always some thief who knows someone who is not a thief and who is looking for something."

"Doesn't everyone know a fence or someone like that?"

"No, no, only some do. Say that there are fifty quite well-established thieves in Malmö, only thirty of those have a fence. Those who don't are the younger ones around eighteen or twenty who haven't been around enough, so they'll have to ask their friends or sell to thieves. For someone who's been inside as much as me, it's no problem."

"Would you tell a young guy who's buying?"

"No way. I wouldn't do that. But I could say 'What do you have?' And he'll say, 'I have some gold,' because that's what's common ... 'Well, if you dare to put it in my hands, I'll keep it for you. But then you'll have to stay here in my apartment until I come back.' Because he won't be allowed to come along because I don't want to show him who I'm selling to."

It is no wonder then that a young thief said that one has to track like the Indians to find the fences, and dog the steps of one's associates. Someone else told me about how he had established a contact with a gasoline station owner:

I was with a friend and he sold a stereo to this guy. So when I had a little car stereo and really needed money, I thought, "Do I dare go out to that guy who owns the gas station? Yeah, I'll take the chance and go out there." "Hi, we were here a couple of days ago and sold a stereo, would you like to buy this one as well?" He looked at me a bit suspiciously and asked who I was with. "So and so." "Yeah, that's right. I'll take a look at it." And that's how I got that contact.

There are also other things that demand contacts in the criminal life, which are not immediately connected with crime. Since most criminals are outside the legal labor market, they might want an illegal job. This is also something that requires knowledge of how to get it:

"How about working illegally?"

"Well, I haven't done it, but I know some who have, but it takes a while before you get to know about it."

Being released from prison early might depend on having a job. Since many stated that they did not want a job, they sometimes got a false certificate for a job outside from a friend or associate who had a firm, but, again, this of course also requires connections.

Summing up, there is a high demand for creativity and inventiveness if one is to make it in the criminal world, due to the above-described difficulties in establishing contacts, the non-automatic process of tutelage, lack of possibilities for "re-hearsing", etc.

1.7. Pride in getting by

There often seems to be more of individual planning and effort behind crime than in many other types of occupations. This way of figuring out angles to succeed in different ventures also seems to be a challenge and a source of pride.

Being proud of creativity in illegal money-making activities is not reserved for the successful thieves. Shover writes about how addicts react to the stigma attached to them by the good thieves, for not being able to steal in an organized way, and taking advantage of their own neighborhood, family, etc. The addicts admit that they are not successful as thieves, but demand recognition for their skills. One of his interviewed addicts thus states:

I think, in order for a man to live out there in the streets by his own wits, and his own ability, and his own initiative ... takes more than a notion, you know. It's not easy, it's a pretty hard road, you know ... I would say as far as ingenuity and in the things he thinks of and ideas and what not, I wouldn't say he's inferior to any other thief. (1971:51-52)

The hobos, whom Nels Anderson wrote about, had serious problems

in supporting themselves. In a chapter called "The Game of 'Getting By'", this struggle is described as a compelling challenge as well:

"Getting by" is a game not without its elements of fascination. The man who "panhandles" is getting a compensation that is not wholly measured by the nickles and dimes he accumulates. Even the peddler of shoestrings likes to think of "good days" when he is able to surpass himself. It matters not by what means "the down-and-out" gets his living; he manages to find a certain satisfaction in the game. The necessity of "putting it over" has its own compensations. (1961:55)

The jazz musician and former addict David Allyn confirms that some of the things one does while almost "down and out" can, at least in retrospect, be viewed with a certain appreciation:

I was the first one to rent a \$1,500 camera, carry it uptown, take off the serial number and sell it for \$700. Necessity is the mother of invention. When you become an addict, all the energies go into manipulating and cunning. It's so sick, it's funny too, but it's so sick. (*Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1982: 84)

1.8. Knowledge as investment

After some time in criminality, obviously many legal doors close. One becomes therefore more reliant on the criminal ones in terms of financial as well as social support. Another process which can lead to a higher involvement is more neglected: one's own investment in a criminal world.

Getting to know the ropes of criminal living is quite time-consuming. The inhabitants in this world have invested a lot in getting to know the necessary people, have invested psychologically in being known as a trustful person, etc. The time spent in prison can be seen in the same light: from the point of view of investment, it can serve to enforce commitment to crime. First of all, it would be wasteful not to use the skills one picked up while in prison, and secondly, the actual time spent there is a positive merit in the world of crime.

This investment can of course lead to a feeling that this life owes you something. The card and dice hustlers that Prus and Sharper (1977) studied thus expressed a feeling that "hustling owed them something": a debt that could only be realized through greater participation.

Maybe this is part of the reason for the dream of the big score. This was usually not mentioned, in other ways than with a laugh, but the existence of the dream (even if most are quite realistic in thinking they will not make it) might be due to a feeling of "Just that one, because this life owes me something".

2. BEATING THE SYSTEM

To lead a criminal life requires cunning and inventiveness not only in conjunction with crime. Some different strategies of beating the system¹ are discussed here. These can be said to be ways of actively defending a criminal lifestyle by outwitting the system through rational means and a way of showing that one can exercise control.

Beating the system is something not only so-called professional thieves (Sutherland 1937), persistent criminals (Cressey 1972) or "good burglars" (Shover 1971) are engaged in. Young thieves, the less skilled, etc. in my study also used these techniques when they could and during the times when they were committed to criminal life.

2.1. Having a front for the authorities

One of the main strategies, of course, is having a front (Goffman 1959). This can include techniques of using the welfare office for reasons other than the conventional one of getting money. As a young drug dealer described it, the reason for his being on welfare was not the need for cash but to have a front to pacify other official agencies which might otherwise wonder how he made his living. This young dealer was also quite proud of having been able to supply a girlfriend and two other friends during this time with drugs, food, lodging, etc. At the same time he had been able to establish himself in a nice apartment with expensive furniture. Plate (1975) recounts similar methods of using the welfare office by American criminals.

The need to keep a front vis-à-vis the police is obviously important. The account below of what it takes is probably exaggerated but at least it reveals an ideal view of how this is done:

"If you make a good haul [break-in], you can buy yourself a better car, so it'll take more time for the police to catch up

with you. You sort of take care of your background, protect your rear. Because if you protect your rear the police won't find you as easy as otherwise. But it can get expensive."

"How?"

"Well, it's like ... If you're gonna make it you have to wear a mask for the outside world. You'll have to have two apartments, they'll cost you some rent. You have to, you should have a broad that you live with ... she'll cost money ..."

2.2. Using one's criminal identity

Prisoner organizations can be easy preys for criminals committed to their lifestyle. Discussing opportunists in organizations set up to help prisoners, the American sociologist Irwin describes these in the following way:

Many opportunists, however, found the movement especially suited to their talents and needs. It offered them access to "movement chicks", fame, some financial support, a front for illegal activities, and a defense - that of police harassment because of their political activities - when they were arrested. (1980:120)

Later he describes the infiltration of one such criminal into the Prisoners' Union, which he used as a front for illegal activities:

Because of his reputation as a bully and informer in prison, he was disliked by most of the ex-prisoners present, but his aggressive display in the style of the "hog" (a tough convict) won him election of the first board of directors ... he participated in the planning and public activities of the union, always presenting himself as a true convict who was looking out for the interest of the prisoners ... All the while, he continued a full "street life": pimping, hustling, and dealing drugs. (Ibid.: 121)

According to my respondents, this unintended usage of prisoners' organizations is not exclusive for the US. One thief in my study would like to have a sort of mafia organization because it would mean protection:

Like you as students take care of each other and accept each other and have clubs, unions. We don't have any fraternal organizations, well, we've got some disguised ones, RFHL and we've got KRUM where thieves meet but ... You should just know how many business deals that are made there behind the scenes.

RFHL and KRUM, which are reportedly used in this unplanned way, are organizations that are supposed to rehabilitate and help prisoners and addicts on a voluntary basis.

One can also use one's criminal past. This is an advantage if one intends, for example, to stay unemployed. An old thief told me about a period when he had been out of work. I interrupted and asked "Why, couldn't you get a job?" His reply is instructive for those of us who believe that for criminals, having a job is enough to "readjust" them.

Sure I could but I didn't want one. I got a lot of referrals from the employment office and you have to go there during probation so I went over to the employer and when they asked why I hadn't had a job for a while I told them I had been in the pen for the last years and when they asked why, I told them, well, at my last job I stole from my fellow workers, and then I didn't get the job ... (with a straight face). It was a good thing since I didn't want to work (laughter) ...

Needless to say, this man never stole from his fellow workers and when he wanted to go straight, he used quite different strategies to achieve that goal. According to another former thief this method - pretending to have stolen from fellow workers - was quite common and used as a last resource against tolerant employers.²

2.3. Manipulating rehabilitation measures

The last quote can be said to exemplify the difference between constituent and strategic norms (Aubert 1979:11-13), which he describes as having a moral versus a technical connotation. The situation that occurs when both of these are used is a "game in the game". In this context, criminals can thus be seen as using the constituent norms overtly but adhere privately to their strategic norms. Aubert also notes that referring to norms can be means in the strategy and can be used contrary to the original goals of the norms. For prisoners, the general goal of rehabilitation and the norms that say one should encourage this can, of course, be used in ways that were not anticipated.

A former thief:

Some years ago you could get your drivers' licence inside the pen and at that time many nagged about it until they got permission to take it because they claimed becoming a driver was the only way they could make it when they got out. But they only wanted it so they could drive legally while out scoring at nights.

Another example is the use of job-related rehabilitation. A man whom I labelled a "prisoner politician", who worked for prisoners' rights and improved conditions (he was respected by the other inmates as far as I could judge but must have had a hard job at times) discussed such a program with two others, a young man clearly committed to his lifestyle and an older thief who stated from the beginning that he had never wanted to work and that was why he supported himself by crime.

The young man: "But when I get out, they're never gonna get me to work, never ... I'm never gonna put myself in a workshop to turn or weld or something."

The politician: "But they'll fix an apartment, work. Damn it, they'll arrange everything for you."

The young man: "Yeah, sure, but it's a matter of wanting to work when you get out. I don't want to. But during imprisonment I guess I could accept their ..."

The older man: "You mean use it to get a good daypass or something?"

The young man: "Yeah."

The older man: "Well, it's not a waste of time ..."

The young man: "Right, you'll have that education later, even if you don't want it now."

The politician: "Well, to me it's wrong to start something that you don't take up later."

The older man: "Well, I don't know many who do."

The politician: "It's a high percentage, eight out of thirty-five, that's pretty good anyhow."

The young man: "I've got a lot of friends who've done that stuff, and received daypasses and then when they've been released, it's just like 'Why the hell should we go to work in a factory?'"

For those who either cannot get a job or do not want one, a phony job is a way to get parole. I do not know how common the practice of false certificates is. A couple of inmates referred to them but I would guess there are not many who have the contacts and a good enough reputation to get them. Nevertheless, here is a discussion between an inmate who did not want to work

but got a phony job the last time he had been out of prison and a young inmate not having the necessary connections to get one:

The first inmate: "You can get yourself a certificate saying that you're employed by a small business somewhere. They'll check if the firm is registered and of course it is, and that's it. It's a way to get out."

The young inmate: "I don't know how to get something like that. I don't have the connections, haven't been around those kind of people ..."

The first inmate: "You've got to have contacts, you've got to know where to go. If you don't have the knowledge you won't get anything ... Last time I was out on a thing like that I had such unbelievable luck that when the probation officer came to check, I just happened to be there on other business."

The interviewer: "Couldn't you get a real job there?"

The first inmate: "Yeah, sure I could, but I didn't want it."

He added that he had supported himself by crime since 1960 except for six years, and there was no reason why he should take a lower-paid job.

This technique seems to work in the United States as well. According to Dunn, the convict in *The Time Game*, he got out through his father's arranging a "shuck job" on the outside which he paid some money for. His comment about the prison officials: "They're so easy to beat it's pitiful." (Manocchio and Dunn 1970:236)

The sociologist Waldorf in his book *Careers in Dope* has described how abstention programs can be used as a service instead of as rehabilitation:

More often than not he goes to treatment to avoid some pressure being exerted upon him; seldom is it because he wants to give up drugs. If an abstention program is not aware of the addict's motivations and actually tests them, the program comes to be used by the addict in ways that were never intended: as a service, rather than as rehabilitation; as a temporary shelter; as a place in which to clean up in order to get high again or to manage one's habit more easily. (1973:24)

An addict can sometimes get out of prison or shorten his time there and be admitted instead to a rehabilitation program. Some of those I interviewed stated that they pretended that they wanted to quit drugs only in order to make use of this possi-

bility. Below an example from an American addict:

"Both times I took Article Nine," P___ said. "That's when the bulls have you on a burglary rap, and you sign to go to a hospital to be cured of addiction. Most addicts take Article Nine, and then go right back to drugs when they get out." (Bowers, 1967:54)

It is thus important to take into account the individual's wishes and interests at certain times in his life. Prus and Sharper, writing about card and dice hustlers, emphasize situations, investments and opportunity structures as being important for involvement - be it in legal or illegal activities:

Persons assess recognized options vis-à-vis feasibility in promoting their interests as they define their interest at that time. (my underlining) (1977:167)

This former thief emphasizes for example the importance of wanting to go straight:

In the beginning you'll have to take whatever shitty job you can get and I got pretty good help, requisition for work clothes and ordinary clothes. I even got help to buy a motor bike and money to start off with ... Many who get things like that will use or sell requisitions and buy liquor instead. I used to do that myself. That's how it works for those who don't want to straighten up.

Some of the ways described above seem common knowledge for members in different deviant subcultures but it is up to the individual whether he chooses to "work them" or not; and if so, if he has the skills, contacts, etc. to be able to succeed.

Finally, it is interesting that even if one wants to get out of crime, one may have to use one's wits to get out on one's own terms. This young man wanted to quit drugs but not change his lifestyle which very much centered around cars. He is currently studying at a technical high school where he is supposed to continue after prison:

"Are you going to use that?"

"Well, I don't know. You have to have something to show, see ..."

"Are you going to continue as before?"

"No, not as I've lived so far. But I can't drop everything, I just can't. Selling and buying cars is something I want to do but that doesn't sound good enough to the authorities so I have to have something that looks good to them."

2.4. Giving a sense of control

Beating the system has in addition to instrumental value, even symbolic value by giving a sense of being in control of a rather unpredictable life.

Zola (1964) studied men engaged in off-track betting on horses at a bar in a working-class area. Through their knowledge and skills in selecting horses, they gained recognition and attention in the group and winning meant "beating the system". The "system", which they frequently mentioned, referred more to life or fate than a principle underlying the races. Thus, the obvious satisfaction a safe-cracker showed in telling me how he had cheated a social worker is, I believe, not only restricted to the relationship between the two:

He was fresh from school you know and thought he could reform me, but I taught him and after half a year he quit. I don't think he's ever gonna work as a probation officer again ... (laughter).

However, even when things did not go their way and they did not receive the cooperation that they wanted, many showed a surprising tolerance. In discussions about social workers who had failed to help them, probation officers who never had time, hotels that refused them rooms, life on social welfare, etc., many, after initially being upset, said things like, "Well, on the other hand you have to understand them, they've probably gotten burnt a lot of times." A rather realistic attitude.

This attitude seems rather generous to an outsider, especially as some of the criminals have been in quite desperate situations. It could perhaps be explained by the fact that the criminals themselves had at times the upperhand. Beating the system

along with practical value also has symbolic value in that it gives a sense of being in control, as discussed above. Having at times experienced this feeling and acting in your own interest (as opposed to that of the officials), you can be generous towards those who on another occasion would not believe you even if you are telling the truth, and have honorable intentions.

3. BUSINESS ORIENTATION

3.1. The wish to have a business.

One of the things that struck me while interviewing was the common dream of having a small firm: a car repair shop, a small farm, etc.

In a questionnaire to 101 inmates from a study in 1978, the following question was posed:

Table 6. "Would you like to work with or as the following very much, much, little, or very little?"

%	Very much or much	Very little or little
Have your own small firm (e.g. shop, car repair shop, etc.)	95	5
Work with children or young people	74	26
Photographer	71	29
Electrician	63	37
Work with the "socially misadjusted"	62	38
Car salesman	58	42
Car mechanic	58	42
Work with the sick	56	44
Sailor	48	52
Taxi driver	45	55
Gardening or farm work	45	55
Cook	43	57
Lumberjack	32	68
Carpenter	32	68
Waiter	21	79
Plumber	20	80
Crane operator	17	83
Welder	10	90
Factory worker	4	96

Note: Around a third did not answer or answered that they did not know.

The different alternatives given were based on types of jobs that were mentioned in taped interviews or seen as possible alternatives for this group (such as gardening or farming, cook or factory worker). Almost everyone of those who answered wanted to have a small firm of his own, while only four percent wanted to be a factory worker.

In the later questionnaire, administered in 1981, the inmates and the control group were asked:

Table 7. "Would you like to own a business or a small firm?"

%	Inmates	Control group	
		Blue-collar	White-collar
Yes	64	50	40
No	18	19	31
Don't know	18	31	29
Sum	100	100	100
N	(137)	(104)	(92)

This time those interested in owning a business are fewer than in the first result from 1978. The difference in approach probably accounts for the difference in reply: the 1981 questionnaire asks how many actually want to have a business, the 1978 one, what they prefer in comparison to other legal types of work.

The thieves show a remarkably high wish to own a business. The wish of the addicts is, as expected, a bit lower, as shown in the next question where a comparison is made from a SIFO sample.

Table 8. "I would not mind starting a business of my own."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	76	8	16	100	(37)
Addicts	53	24	24	100	(17)
All inmates	67	13	20	100	(115)
SIFO	48	34	17	100	(125)

All inmate groups seem however to enjoy doing business, to a higher degree than the SIFO sample:

Table 9. "I enjoy buying and selling things (doing business)."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	61	22	17	100	(116)
SIFO	32	45	23	100	(125)

The traditional thieves, who have been seen as those with the largest degree of business orientation, had as expected a higher percentage. On the alternative "agree strongly",¹ they totalled 43% while the rest of the inmate group had 24%, and the SIFO group only 14%.

It can finally be added that the dream among thieves of having a business seems to be shared by their American brothers. A quote from Shover on the "good burglar" (i.e., so defined by other burglars):

His great ambition is to invest his money so as to have a steady, secure, and legitimate source of income. In his mind he typically sees this, and freedom from supervision of others ("be my own boss") epitomized in the small businessman. (1971: 131-132)

3.2. Having had a business

Table 10. "Have you ever had a business or a small firm of your own?"

%	Inmates	Control group
Yes	26	5
Yes, a criminal one	5	-
No	69	95
Sum	100	100
N	(143)	(198)

A third of the inmates states that they have had a business - legal or illegal.² Compared to the control group, this is quite a high number: of those, only 5% stated that they have had a business or a small firm of their own.³ It can also be mentioned here that 14% of the inmates' fathers - compared to 5% of the control groups' - have had a business of their own.

The businesses that the interviewees had owned varied from the inmate who, in a taped interview stated that he had 13 people working for him in a construction firm, to that of the used car dealer with his business in his pocket, and others, who had grown vegetables, potatoes, etc. Most of them, however, had had a one-man type of firm.

They also seem to have learnt some business-related skills:

Table 11. "I am good at bargaining."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	35	39	26	100	(115)
SIFO	21	52	27	100	(125)

It is interesting that many of the inmates actually were contemptuous towards those who engaged in bargaining for "petty

things", which their orientation towards money and consumption as men-of-the-world (See Chapter 7) would not permit them to do. I have, however, seen some of them engaged in bargaining for their own amusement, in situations where this could be done without disrupting the image of themselves as a man-of-the-world who handles money in a careless way. There is however probably a difference here between those who sell to civilians or buy stolen goods themselves - in these areas there are possibilities for bargaining. The thief who sold to an established fence, on the other hand, often had to accept a given offer.

3.3. The criminal world as an economic world

We have seen that the role of entrepreneur is attractive. Hence, the question arises whether the inmates perceive their criminal activities in terms of business. If so, how can crime (stealing, drug dealing, etc.) be compared with the legal business world? In the analysis below, which is by no means complete or theoretically comprehensive, I have concentrated on issues covered by my material, such as investments, contacts, etc. I will also discuss matters, such as the reputation of the actor, which might not directly belong to a market analysis, but nonetheless are important in this context.

One of the classical scholars in sociology, Veblen, saw the similarities between businessmen and criminals in this way:

The ideal pecuniary man is like the ideal delinquent in his unscrupulous conversion of goods and persons to his own ends, and in a callous disregard of feelings and wishes of others and of the remote effects of his actions, but he is unlike him in possessing a keener sense of status and in working more farsightedly to a remoter end. (1912:237)

Status, however, is important for thieves and also drug dealers, but this will be discussed later. Inciardi has described the professional thief's attitude towards stealing as business:

To the trained professional thief, stealing is a business ...
Like other commercial enterprises, theft involves hard work

of planning and execution. Business possibilities, conditions, returns, locations, opportunities, new methods - all the factors affecting economic feasibility of theft are approached in the same manner as other business pursuits. (1974:333)

3.3.1. The criminal world - a world of free competition

A former thief, who was proud of having been a good thief but wanted to quit because "all that counts here is money, money and prestige", made the following comment:

The possibility exists there for everyone to have a high income as well as a good reputation in a criminal way ... But like the society outside, it's not many who can make it ... It takes quite a lot of ruthlessness and lack of feeling for others: to put it plainly, cruelty. In the criminal world there are no values at all, so the most ruthless will be best off.

"Ruthlessness", however, seems to be appreciated by some. They talked, with a certain enjoyment, about times when they managed to cheat someone in a deal, a typical *caveat emptor* attitude. The common attitude seems to be: you get cheated but then cheat others in turn, "business is business".

This quote is an illustration:

I didn't know it, but I had gotten cheated myself and had bought black and white TV sets thinking they were color TV's. They were all together somewhere, and I didn't look at them. Well, this guy in his turn sold them as color TV's. They've never admitted they made a lousy deal or accused me. There are many funny things like that, that's happened, you know ...

Another man told about how he did not really like pimps because they were cowardly and greedy, and thus enjoyed cheating them:

"They really get a kick out of gold, everything that glitters ... I've sold gold to them that wasn't gold." (laughter) "That's a type of business you can laugh at."

"They swallowed it?"

"Yeah, but then they're so prestige conscious, they can't admit to having been blown."

3.3.2. _ Working one's way up

If one sees the criminal world as a business where free competition rules, the possibility of working oneself up by brains or work in the old-fashioned entrepreneurist way ought to exist. This also seems to be the case. Some of the inmates state in the interviews that they have done so, either by different business deals or by gaining respect in the criminal world and thereby working oneself up the ladder.

When I get out of the pen, I usually use my start-off money⁴ to buy a car - that's number one, the most important thing. After that, I'll fix some stuff to sell on credit, and I get it so cheap that I can make a profit and use it to buy larger amounts to sell. So I've always started off that way ...

If one does not have the contacts that allow one to sell on credit, one can start with stealing instead. This is a good way, according to some interviewees, because a crowbar is cheap - you can even steal that too, if necessary. After collecting a small capital in this way, some reported that they invested it in the more lucrative business of drugs. According to Plate (1975), this first capital is called "seed money" among American criminals.

3.3.3. _ Investments

Investments can be viewed in terms of either time or money. Crime as business is in many ways time-consuming, as is illustrated both in Chapters 1 and 5.

Making monetary investments in money does not seem to be a vital issue for the majority of thieves - those who do not plan and execute big "jobs" such as bank robberies. For the drug dealers, on the other hand, it is important to have capital.

"You create your own life ... A few years ago you could start off with a couple of crowns, now that's nothing ..."

"You need contacts?"

"Well, that's no problem, you can always fix that."

"You need money?"

"Yeah, quite a lot today."

"How do you get that?"

"Well, as I said, stealing is foreign to me. But you might have a bit in the bank or you might work. So the first time you start out with a thousand crowns and after a while you want more, have higher demands. So you'll have to make a profit on that so you'll have a capital that you can make further investments with. And right now the profit is so high that you'll always get your money back."

"Do you put in money together with some friends?"

"If you just want to smoke, but not if you're selling. Then you buy speculatively."

There is, however, an inter-relationship between stealing and drugs in the way that some made their capital through stealing and then invested it in drugs - a way to get started. As was shown above, some do not want to steal. Most of the interviewed inmates, however, did not object to this practice. An addict in a rehabilitation program:

Some begin with stealing to get some money. Then they buy themselves a small amount of drugs and set themselves up in business.

The use of drugs can automatically bring one into business and thus solve the economical problems, at least for the moment. A former addict even claimed he had more money while he was an addict than otherwise:

During that time I never had any problems, was never short of money.

In comparison then with a legal business, a criminal business seems to be easier to start, since less investment is needed. This might be one of the attractions that draws one to illegal business.

3.3.4._ Contacts_with buyers, fences, etc.

Personal contacts that depend on trust are of course essential in the criminal world. There are no official channels, no consumer ombudsmen, etc.

Sellerberg (1982) has argued that the opposite is true for transactions in the modern society. Due to different regulations protecting the consumer, he or she no longer needs to have a personal knowledge of the salesman. In the criminal world, on the other hand, the sellers must create this confidence in their customers, except, of course, when the demand is so high that the seller can call the shots, as for example when drugs are hard to get hold of.

The mere making of contacts can be difficult. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, finding a fence for example is not as easy as one might assume. One respondent had even made a business of "knowing people". He sold names of buyers of stolen goods. Doing this, he charged both the thief and the fence and thereby had a quite lucrative information 'bureau' of his own.

Contacts for drug buying or selling are as important and not easily acquired. An Iranian I talked to had for example run into great difficulties when he tried to sell the heroin he had smuggled in and planned to live on in Sweden because he did not know the people in the game. Prices on drugs also vary of course depending on the degree that one is involved with the right circles:

If you're in business and at the top, you'll have the contacts, but if not, you'll have to go down to the park yourself and buy a small bag for a lot of money.

Thus, contacts are important both for supporting your own addiction at a lesser cost and also for being in business: being able to buy for selling. Some of the respondents even said that contacts "meant everything" in criminal life - without them, one was lost.

3.3.4.1. *Whom to sell to*

Not selling to professional fences is looked down upon by the "good burglars", not only as being beneath them, but also prac-

tically - they had to have someone who could handle large amounts. They sometimes had to unload, for example, a whole truckful of cigarettes, or other big scores. They thought furthermore that those who did sell directly to the buyer did not know in advance where to dump their goods. Especially for younger thieves, this was sometimes the case, but some of those who sold directly were quite rational in arguing for not selling to fences. The fence is obviously a middleman, and can thus not afford to pay a price as high as someone who is going to use the goods himself. The price was an argument for selling directly. Another reason was that it was more secure selling to many, since that made an arrest for major theft less likely. Here, the police would find only small quantities of the actual amount, that is, if the buyers did not know each other. Furthermore, this type of selling was not always done in an unplanned way. Some had established networks of contacts and thus had prepared channels for delivery. Hence, this can be as "professional" as the practice of selling to a fence, as the "good burglars" did.

You know, if you're in a clothes shop, you know what sizes you can place, so you know what you're looking for. Ann Andersson's a 38 so you'll grab five for her and five in size 52 for her husband, and so on. You plan it because you have to. The sort of fast jobs like running into a store, grabbing a tape-recorder and running out again - that won't last long, you'll get busted. That's the type of thing you did when you were young, you know.

Similarly, the American criminologist Inciardi (1974) writes about stealing to order. A number of his informants also stole items of a predetermined price and had buyers' "shopping lists". According to them, this system was more profitable, and thus preferable to selling to a fence.

3.3.5. _ Reputation

Once the contacts are made, it is essential for the thief to acquire the reputation of being "good" in different ways, for example being reliable.

Acquiring a reputation as someone who is trustworthy is not

only important for social reasons, but also for being successful in business. Selling drugs on credit is common among drug addicts. Often, however, this is not carried out properly. The seller might use too much himself and will not be able to pay the bigger dealer. Since there do not exist any police or other agencies in the criminal world to collect the missing money, the only resort is violence - by using it yourself, or having someone do it for you. But, as a drug dealer said, "It's not much use beating up a guy - you won't get your money back anyway." Given this background of the stated unreliability of addicts, one older addict was quite proud of his record of never having delayed with his payments. Due to this he had been able to climb in the drug-dealing hierarchy:

"How did you get established as a dealer?"

"That's a tough question. I didn't establish myself, it's just that I've never cheated anyone, which is really uncommon in the dealing trade, where bad shit is sold and where people are charged too much and all that stuff. I've never done that, always fixed my debts immediately and seldom bought on credit. I'd done some small scale dealing ... your reputation spreads around quickly if you've blown someone or made a bad deal or something. It's only one percent who haven't and that's the percentage that'll get the chance ... so that's the way I've got it. If you get a hecto or half a kilo on credit without paying in advance, you've established yourself as honest."

Another, more common, case is this man:

"How did you get to be a dealer?"

"Well, you know, if you're in a field for a year and work it 24 hours a day - using drugs is nothing for the lazy people, those who're in it are usually very energetic people. Well, after this time I've heard a few things, so I know a lot, and if you have some money, then I know where to go to buy for a wholesale price which is 50% cheaper, and I'll be safe. But then those middlemen like me ... you give it a try but after a while the addict in you takes command over the businessman, so it won't keep on for long."

One can also try to make and make use of a good reputation, by selling cheap. A man, not dealing in drugs but working as a fence, talked about getting a reputation by using "good prices" in order to make steady customers. When we discussed selling to ordinary people, which he had done, he stated:

You should be aware that everything is possible to fix, even though it might take some time. By this, I don't mean that you have to go stealing it yourself ... and if you don't earn a lot on this particular deal you can let it go, there might be more occasions.

Interestingly, Joy Browne (1973) reported that the used car salesmen she studied used the same technique in order to keep their customers.

Finally, the importance of a good reputation if you are to succeed in the criminal world is illustrated by the thief who told me he quit drugs because his reputation had gone down, which he could not afford.

3.3.6. Consumer demands

Like other businessmen, criminals need to know what is sellable for the moment. Lewis, who has emphasized the rationality of hustling, writes about the consumer demand dimension in this context:

Whatever the hustle, it invariably invokes a high degree of rational planning and the exercise of mental agility. Not only does the hustler have to "outwit the law" but he must also be several jumps ahead of his clientele ... Beyond this he must also engage in a market analysis of considerable sophistication. He has to take on goods which are likely to have a fast turnover on the market to which he has access. This means that the hustler has to assess accurately local taste and consumer demand ... Beyond maintaining a market or consumer analysis, the hustler who is "fencing" must also work out acceptable profit margins in his "retailing" operation ... It would indeed be difficult to find in a legitimate economic enterprise endeavors which exceed this hustle in the exercise of sophistication and rationality. (1970:179-180)

As seen in the quote above, the hustler must be aware of certain consumer demands in order to make it. This elderly thief is a good example of what was stated above:

"What do you steal?"

"That depends on what's sellable for the moment."

"How do you mean?"

"The demand ... the stuff I know works. Everything from gold, that's always in circulation, to stamp collections, old coins, drugs ..."

Others have talked about gold as the item that "sells best these days", tape recorders as absolutely "out", etc.

3.4. Differences between addicts and thieves

3.4.1. Addicts

The heroin user is, in a way, like the compulsive hard working business executive whose ostensible goal is the acquisition of money, but whose real satisfaction is in meeting the inordinate challenge he creates for himself. (Preble and Casey 1969:21)

The authors, who have studied heroin users in New York, criticize the usual escape theories of addiction - escape from life, from psychological problems or social responsibility, as well as Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) "double failure" thesis. This stated that those who neither succeed in the lawful or the criminal world formed a retreatist subculture which centered around the consumption of drugs. Instead, Preble and Casey claim that addicts are engaged in "aggressively pursuing a career that is exciting, challenging, adventurous, and rewarding. They are always on the move and must be alert, flexible and resourceful." (Ibid.:22)

The authors even note the heroin user's way of walking. It is purposeful and fast as if he is late for an important meeting - which he usually is. A Swedish former addict pointed out the same thing for me. The way to recognize the "real" addicts in the streets was the way they walked, and he described this in the same manner as the authors above.

The addicts in Preble and Casey's study are thus occupied with "taking care of business", and this is reflected in answers to questions like "How are you doing?", or "What's happening?",

where the common answer is "Taking care of biz". The quest for heroin, then, for them is a quest for a meaningful life and the meaning of the drug lies mainly in the gratification of the challenges and excitement it provides in their life, rather than the biological effects, according to the authors.

Sutter, who has also studied addicts with a similar approach as the authors above, emphasizes the importance of not putting addicts in one category but differentiating them into several groups with different lifestyles. These groups are based both on a career formation and on different beliefs and interests. "Players", for example, shift their drug use to hustling:

A player shifts his game from play to "serious business" and a preoccupation with a master crime scheme for the future. Hustling appears to many as the road to an elite type of existence, success, prestige, and luxury. (1969:816)

Sutter also notes that the player performs a crucial role in the adolescent marketplace, and mediates the flow of drugs and hot merchandise from adult hustlers to adolescent consumers. Drug use takes an instrumental slant and the theme of enterprise supplants the theme of sociability.

3.4.2. Thieves

On the contrary, thieves seem to have an inverted relation to drugs and money. After becoming interested in the profit available, they have to use drugs in order to know what they are selling. Some reported that they got addicted this way.

Thieves are also involved in business activities in a somewhat different way than addicts. Those who steal goods instead of money have to have a fair idea of what they are stealing. If this is jewelry or art, they have to have more than a common knowledge about these items. A fence, claiming that he does not cheat the burglars, says, however:

Most of these young thieves, they can't recognize stones or

they'll think white gold is silver, and can't understand that there are diamonds attached to a ring like that. So after I examine what they bring, I'll ask them "What do you want?", and they'll give a price ...

Not only fences are in a position to take advantage of their knowledge: thieves can do the same provided that they do not sell to those in the know:

"Once I even sold a Concert Hall [a stereo] that costs seven hundred crowns to him for fifteen hundred."

"Didn't he get angry then?"

"No, he never noticed."

The older thieves seemed to have fixed prices with fences and did not engage in bargaining as much as the younger ones. A thief who sells to professional fences:

"Do you get what you ask for your goods?"

"There are fixed prices and more or less accepted rules, like how much you get for your gold at the moment."

Another consideration is not to sell too cheaply, as addicts tend to do. Yet another rule for thieves is never to do business with addicts, as they "snitch".

They aren't trustworthy and can't keep their cool. If you do - if there aren't ten running after you the next day, then you can easily count on being busted.

And they "dump the market":

There have been times when things have been hard to sell ... but gold is the same as money, it's always possible to sell but it's a question of getting the right price for it. You can sell everything, you know, but the question is how much you want. You don't want to give things away so you'll have to try to get something that's proportionate to its value ... And then you have those damned heroinists that dump the market - they'll sell at whatever price they can get, as long as they get their fix.

3.5. Types of business orientation

3.5.1. Action oriented

Having a business means different things for different people. Criminals want to consider themselves "businessmen" rather than actually having a business somewhere.

In a comparison of fast food franchisees and cleaning franchisees, Sklar described the first group as action-seekers:

Contrary to the notion that small businessmen are committed to a lifetime of building up a specific business ... Any particular business is treated as a gambling event ... His commitment is not to ownership of a small business but to "small business ownership". (1977:44)

The difference between the groups was reflected in their respective language. Goffman (1967) has pointed out that an action-seeking lifestyle includes expressions such as "blowing it", "having it made", and "having something going for oneself". This terminology was used by the fast food franchisees.

The interviewed criminals often described their illegitimate activities in a similar fashion. One example of this:

You can work yourself up by starting out with a small capital and invest it in drugs and thereby get something going for yourself if you are smart. When you are in business, if you're a drug dealer, you've gotta administer the business, which you can do sitting at a restaurant giving orders to your subordinates. When you have blown it, you have to start all over again. (My underlinings)

3.5.2. Thieves want to be small independent businessmen - not in organized crime

The ideal in this world of business among most of those interviewed is not, however, to get into big business in crime like the mafia or so-called organized crime. They are thus not striv-

ing for rationality in the sense of an effective division of labor, that Cressey (1972) sees as characterizing organized crime. The emphasis is instead on being a small independent businessman and having control of oneself and one's criminal projects. Many stated that "... in this world everybody works for himself." This quote by an elderly burglar can be seen as quite typical:

"Thefts aren't organized - all of these people are their own businessmen."

"Do they want it that way?"

"Yeah, I believe so ... and that's what gives the best profit as well."

According to a question about how crime was organized in Sweden, few believed that there was anything resembling a mafia in Sweden - only one percent thought so. Most mentioned individuals committing crimes: 21%, while 19% stated "groups", and 18% "organizations that shifted a lot". (17% mentioned a mixture of the alternatives, 18% did not know, and 5% did not answer.) Very few, 7%, stated that they would like to have a more organized crime scene.

One of the really committed criminals, who did not believe that the mafia existed, said:

"Do you think that criminality ought to be organized?"

"No, it's the freedom I'm looking for, I want to have a free life. I don't want to be dependent on anything. Organized crime, what in hell is it? Some kind of mafia? No, I don't believe in that." (with contempt)

"You don't think it exists in Sweden?"

"There might be people who think that they belong to such stuff. They've read too many thrillers."

"Is it foreign groups?"

"I don't know, but you have seen how it's been lately, they shoot each other and I don't know what that's supposed to be good for." (laughter) "I don't believe it exists in the States either, it's ridiculous."

This man viewed some of the foreigners as trying to act as if they were involved in organized crime and using violence as a means in their business dealings. The following quote pictures how he resents this and values his freedom:

"I've gotten to know many of the foreigners that have clubs and have been involved in some of their businesses. There is so much unfriendliness in these foreign gangs ... their attitudes are different, they're trying to get something all the time and that's what their activities are all about. So you feel as if you're used ... Many of them are really greedy and as soon as you're doing business with them they want some sort of security to keep you in line with, like a family or something ..."

"That's quite a threat."

"Yeah, but I don't have one. I'm free in their eyes, I've always been free both inside the pen and outside because if things don't suit me, I'll tell anyone. And if this doesn't suit anyone, I'll just skip 'em and it doesn't matter how much or how attractive it a business or a deal is."

An American thief confirms the same attitude of preferring to be a lone wolf rather than losing his independent status:

A thief is an outlaw. In more ways than one ... If you're in the rackets you're in an organization. You can go up but you go up slow. If you're a burglar or a stickup man or any type of specific thief, you're strictly operating as an individual, you're an independent worker, you have a different feeling about things, you're not tied down. (Martin 1952:139)

Except for wanting to remain free from organizations, thieves might also reject the long-term monetary goals that they see in the organized groups. One inmate in my interviews saw the foreign gangs as strange because they wanted to save all their money for relatives at home. King, in his biography, explains why the rackets do not appeal to him:

A thief cannot go into that, a buck don't mean nothing to him. It's real hard for a thief to plan, what you call, by the month. If I got a buck in my pocket, then I spend the buck. If I ain't got it, then I look around for one. You're trained that way for years so to become adjusted to work for the rackets is very hard for you ... A thief cannot become a successful businessman. On the average he can't. He hasn't got a chance. He has got to stay in his own business. That's why the syndicates are still staying in the rackets. They spend money getting into these legitimate businesses they hardly don't make no money in it. (Chambliss and King 1972:68)

Without considering organized criminality, one might wish to keep one's low level of activity in order for it to remain fun:

Firstly, dealing can be fun. As Richard put it, "First you do

it to make some bread. Then you think it's fun. Then you start getting too big and it gets to be a hustle. Then you want out so you pack it up. After a while you're dealing small and it all becomes fun again." (Goldberg 1973:86)

Even if the theft market is not organized on any big scale according to the interviewees, the drug market, however, is to a higher extent. For some, the increasing organization of the drug market has meant that the fascination with using drugs is gone. An older former addict claims that this was the reason that he quit. He liked the drug, but the tougher elements connected with it made him quit.

The smuggling grew more sophisticated and that meant more money being involved and that in its turn meant more organization. The "money people" wanted to protect their investments so that there was profit left. It got to be a shittier atmosphere ... and that's the way it's been going.

He talked with nostalgia of how it used to be fun going to Germany and buying uppers or asking obese women to get prescriptions from doctors for amphetamines.

Others interviewed, however, recognized the drug business as one of opportunities. Even some of the thieves, who were opposed to the lifestyle of addicts, saw the drug market as something to make money from, and rationalized it by saying, "If I don't do it, someone else will."

3.6. Possible reasons ,

3.6.1. _ Merton's_innovators?

In Merton's famous typology of adjustments to social structure and societal values for individuals, thieves are viewed as "innovators" since they adhere to society's goals of material success, but use alternative means to reach the goals. This has been widely discussed among subcultural scholars in criminology. One major critique is the assumption of one general goal -

status through material success - in society. (See Persson 1982).

It has been said that in Europe with its class tradition, there are at least different goals and values in different social stratas. Merton limited however his reasoning to America with its ideology that claims that everybody has a chance of reaching the top (the American Dream). Bell (1980) has thus argued in the article *Crime as An American Way of Life* that criminality was used by immigrant groups to achieve a certain standard until they reached a position in society where this no longer was necessary.

An American sociologist, Lewis (1970), describes from an actor perspective black slum hustlers as having business orientation, and sees their goals and values as similar to the rest of society. They accept both rationality and achievement.

The author argues that the more conventionally socialized, the greater probability of deviance if born in a slum. This is, however, as I see it, dependent on what one means by socialization. I would guess that the hustlers' families do not want them to be pimps, numbers runners, or bootleggers, even if it brings them material success, and even if these activities, if successful, might give them the reputation of being smart among the younger people in the slum environment. Besides, the conventional society is not entirely directed towards conventional success. There seem to be class differences of importance here (See Goldthorpe 1971; Persson and Dahlgren 1975; Persson 1982.)

West's "serious thieves" - a sample of non-professional thieves - are for example not described as wanting big material success, but enough money to get by without having to resort to what they see as a dull 9-5 job. This was also the main stated reason by my respondents both to why they engaged in crime and why they wanted a business - not therefore, through illegal means, join the upper or middle class.

3.6.2. Independence

The reason why the workers in Goldthorpe's study wanted to have their own business was "to work for oneself"; to be one's own boss (1971:163). As has been stated above, this is also one of the reasons that the inmates want to have a business.

Since the respondents generally placed a high value on independence, and often claimed that this was a reason for their criminality, it makes sense that they would try to achieve it by being self-employed. It is a fact that many dream of having a business if they go straight. Although my knowledge about ex-thieves is limited, my impression (through conversation with thieves, some former thieves, correctional personnel, etc.) is that many do start a business when they quit crime. This might well be interpreted as a way of consistently maintaining one's self-image as an independent man.

Having a business of one's own, whether legal or illegal, means not being subordinated to anyone. The Milners stated that the black hustlers would rather rely on themselves than work for anyone else.

"The chump job" a bad job is seen as the reverse of independence and furthermore benefit of dignity, adventure and respect ... Independence and manhood are why a player, if he goes on the higher game, will only go into business for himself ... (1972:260)

The resemblance to the business-oriented thieves I interviewed, is quite striking.

When they talked about working as a factory worker, they often said, "Well, you value yourself more than that." Thus, in the same manner as the pimps saw the "chump job" as personally degrading, the respondents tended to view an ordinary factory job as something that implied lack of dignity.

3.6.3. Rational means

There might be a consciously calculated rationality in regarding crime as business. Some robbers in Jackson's *In the Life* compared getting caught to a "bankruptcy" in the business world:

And crime, we feel, is just like any other business. In other words, there's setbacks in crime and there's deficits, just like you run a business and there's a chance that you might burn down or go bankrupt ... Of course, the penalty for going bankrupt in crime is much stiffer, but at the same time your material gain is much more than it is in a regular business. (1972:41-42)

One rational reason for starting a business - legal or illegal - might be that it is more difficult for them to find employment since most of them do not have work records to cover the time spent on crime or in prison. A previous card-hustler comments on disinvolvement in hustling in this manner:

But say a guy wants to go straight ... how is he going to get this legitimate job? Who is going to hire him? What training does he have? ... To get out, you have to have the money to invest in a business of some sort or a friend or a relative who will cut you in on some action. (Prus and Sharper 1977:131)

Most criminals do not have this amount of money, but one of the interviewees had actually been "cut into some action" by a relative, and in this way tried to go straight. Since 26% of the interviewees stated that they have had a legal business of their own, one can conclude that it is not impossible for them to start one. One interviewee even claimed that a friend of his had gotten help from the local social welfare office to start a tailor's firm.

Some ex-criminals may have acquired skills in their previous life of crime that they can use in starting a legal business:

Stealing in cellars is pretty common among them addicts and sometimes they'll sell it to some guy who deals with used stuff. You know x, he's an antique dealer now ... he used this and nowadays he's a legitimate, established antique dealer. He got his apprenticeship stealing in dirty old cellars.

3.6.4. _ Getting away from the criminal stigma

Having a legal business of your own can also protect you from the stigma of having been a criminal. You can avoid working closely with people who look down on you. An older addict, supporting himself by selling used cars, says:

It's something you can do by yourself - decide your own working pace, and so on, avoid being a slave to the clock, working 9-5. And no one knows you. I can't handle working regular nowadays ... I guess I could handle the work itself but I can't handle being together with ... the people around.

3.6.5. _ Action

Criminals have been described as action-oriented. Miller (1958) described excitement and thrills as important for the lower class, which is seen as a generating milieu of gang delinquency. Prus and Irini (1980) have also described "rounders", i.e., thieves or hustlers, as centered around action.

The criminal's view of a businessman is one who has an action-dominated life, a way to an independent and unregulated existence, as well as a means of having free time. This interpretation of what it means to have a business differs a lot from the reality of the legal businessman, which often is highly organized and quite routinized in order for him to be successful. In addition, the "straight" businessman must spend much time on his business and do a great deal of paper work - something which most inmates detested.

Doing business, and especially action-oriented business, involves taking chances. Inmates seem to enjoy this more than average people, as 46% of the inmates agreed to "I enjoy taking chances", while only 26% of the SIFO sample agreed. Criminals can thus be said to be more interested in the fast, risky deal than the daily running of a family firm. This can even lead to an appreciation of the criminal type of business rather than the legitimate.

3.7. Legitimate business versus criminal

The respondents saw no difference in honesty between themselves as businessmen and legal businessmen. What then is the difference between them? Some said the latter group were "smarter" or as Eugene, the thief in Martin's biography, said, that they were more patient. Talking about stolen suits being handled by a fence who had a legitimate store:

You can see that the fella that actually handled the merchandise made more than the fella that actually took it. He had the patience to stay in business to handle it, that's all.
(1952:119)

Aside from all the problems a legal business would entail and the problems of acquiring it, there might be other attractions in remaining in the illegal world. Obviously, there are more thrills and excitements - more action - connected with crime.

One of my respondents once had a small leather business which he started while he was in prison. When he got out he was offered to continue in cooperation with a saddle-making firm. He did this for a while, but quit when it got to be too much administration and organization. He said he was too restless for those types of working conditions.

Preble and Casey question the narcotic maintenance programs (where addicts get drugs legally and at no cost) on the ground that many in these programs might not want to quit. One of their respondents is quoted here:

The guy feels that all the fun is out of it. You don't have to outslick the cop and other people. This is sort of vengeance. This gives you a thrill. It's hiding from them. Where you can go in the drug-store and get a shot, you get high, but it's the same sort of monotony. You are not getting away with anything. The thing is to hide and outslick someone. Drugs is a hell of a game; it gives you a million things to talk about.
(1969:22-23)

Goffman's statement that there is a dilemma for the individual performer concerning expression versus action is relevant in

asking why criminals do not have a legal business.

Those who have the time or talent to perform a task well may not, because of this, have the time or talent to make it apparent that they are performing well. (1959:33)

Most work tasks are poorly designed in terms of allowing the individual an expression of "desired meaning". Therefore, if the individual seeks dramatization of his work-role, a high level of investments must be made to achieve this at the cost of the actual work task. Thus, criminals' wish to be businessmen can in this sense, at times, hinder their concentration on successfully carrying out their business goals.⁵

A former addict's answer to a question about if he used to go to restaurants can exemplify the feeling that being a businessman is something that is appreciated:

Well, you go to a restaurant when you're at the top of the hierarchy. If you're in a lot of dealing you'll go to restaurants. All my time, there, will be used to administer the drug business. Even if you don't have a large amount, the dealing can be quite extensive, lots of transactions, middle hands and stuff ... Usually this is really clumsy but when you're in it you see yourself as really smart and sophisticated.

Others have talked about how those, who at a certain time have gotten hold of drugs, use others to run errands for them, clean their cars, etc. These things seem quite similar to the picture of the old-fashioned harsh business leader. All these things, being in restaurants, dealing, giving orders, etc., seem to be used to express that one, for the moment at least, is a businessman.

Goffman has said on dramatic realization:

While in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure. (1959:30)

There are of course other reasons why criminals do not start

a legal business. Apart from the obvious ones, like lack of money, one major problem involves leaving one's well-known surroundings, old friends, etc. A black liquor-store owner, who has his store in slum surroundings, claims for example, that he would never change his business location. He explains this by not wanting to be surrounded by people he does not know. White or middle class customers would make him feel "out".

Similarly, the Milners discuss the problem of the pimps who attempt to get out: trying to save and build something for the future, etc., while eliminating simultaneously all their former associates and the security of their older social network.

When white middle-class people are presented with this view of the hustler as a dedicated capitalist who is trapped in the hustling underworld, a common reaction is "Why don't these people do something about it?" ... But it is an extremely rare individual who can step outside of his culture, and throw away the survival kit with which that culture has provided him ... The tools and attitudes, the cultural lenses upon which a man has learned to depend, cannot be easily discarded for another set. (1972:137)

Consequently, one of the problems criminals run into if they start a small legal business is keeping their former associates from hanging around the place (Shover 1971). The question is, then, whether the old friends cannot be kept away or the new business owner wants them to come for reasons given above. The opinion of a former thief:

"I know someone who had a business but he always had a lot of thieves hangin' around."

"Did he have difficulties in saying 'no' to his old pals?"

"Maybe, or probably he didn't want to be away from them at all. They were sitting there planning new scores. He kept it up for half a year, then that was it, he was finished. You can't take care of a business in that way."

4. THIEVES CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY

Criminals have often been described as attributing the responsibility for their acts to external circumstances. Contrary to this belief, most do claim responsibility for their actions and are prepared to take the consequences for them. This seems to be correlated - especially among thieves - with a view of oneself as taking responsibility as an actor-agent, thus not primarily placing the reasons for one's acts on social background or seeing oneself as a victim of circumstances. The individualistic responsibility concerns not only crimes but also norms of making a living. Background factors related to this are norms of manliness and responsible adulthood. Criminals' action-oriented lives as well as their "marginal man" status also serve as a background for "claiming responsibility".

During my first more qualitative studies of criminals in 1977 and 1978, I was surprised by the respondents' tendency to claim individual responsibility. Statements such as "I chose this because ...", "I'll never work in a factory, I prefer this type of life", etc. made me want to test the issue in a more quantitative way. I also wanted to compare inmates with a comparative sample of non-criminal respondents. The questions were formulated quite straightforwardly: "Whose fault is it if someone becomes a criminal?" and to the inmates, "Whose fault is it that you became a criminal?". The responses given can be seen below.

Table 12.

%	All inmates	Thereof thieves	Thereof addicts	Control group	
				Blue-collar	White-collar
It is my (their) own fault	71	74	50	50	46
Society's fault	30	32	44	46	27
My (their) upbringing	27	33	11	58	71
Drugs	18	11	33	26	17
Alcohol	11	12	0	20	8
Friends	4	3	6	40	26
N	(137)	(84)	(18)	(103)	(93)

The result confirmed my initial idea that thieves consider themselves responsible for their criminality.

Sykes and Matza have argued that delinquents are not really committed to their acts. Since they basically do agree with society's norms, they have to use a number of neutralization techniques in order to justify their own behavior. One of these techniques was "denial of responsibility", i.e., blaming, for example, bad environment, as social workers, sociological findings, and so on do.

A number of observers have wryly noted that many delinquents seem to show a surprising awareness of sociological and psychological explanations for their behavior and are quick to point out the causal role of their poor environment. (1957:667)

Since this article, the argument has been passed on in criminological textbooks. Criminals can of course, at strategic moments such as when in court or while talking to social workers, use the technique of denial of responsibility. That they should view themselves as "more acted upon than acting" as Sykes and Matza argue, however, does not seem to be true.

The authors discuss juvenile delinquents and one could argue that my sample consists of older, more committed criminals. The respondents here, however, do not come from a group of so-called professional criminals. Many of them belonged to a group that vacillated between wishing to go straight and wanting to remain in criminal life. Furthermore, about a fifth consists of rather young inmates from 17 to 20 years old. This group did not deviate in their responses to the question above.

When asked about why they were criminals, some of the interviewees went so far as to choose explanations such as their own laziness rather than laying the blame on their upbringing, society, etc. Glaser notes the same tendency among some respondents in one of his studies. One respondent stated for example: "I never wanted to work, I've always been lazy." (1964:480)¹

He reports that inmates at Leavenworth, which has a higher con-

centration of highly recidivist or semi-professional criminals, more often than inmates at the other studied prisons gave the reason for being unable to quit criminality (those who want but fail to) as "personality deficiency"; "weak will" (23%); "impatient or lazy" (30%) (=want a fast buck, won't work); "emotional reaction" (5%) (=get upset, don't care what they do); "not deterred" (5%) (=not afraid of prison any more, too used to prison life) = 63%. Thirty-eight percent of the prisoners at Leavenworth stated environmental reasons.

At the other prisons it was almost the reverse relationship: circa 60% stating environmental reasons, around 40% "weak will", etc.

West's (1982) study provides additional evidence. Only 8% of the 18-year old and 26% of the 21-year old juvenile delinquents stated self-exculpatory (making excuses, denial of responsibility) motives for various kinds of offenses.

Finally, it can be added that when the criminals I interviewed talked about others, they were more inclined to attribute causes for their crimes to bad upbringing, etc. than when they talked about themselves. They also seemed to describe prison as having worse consequences for others than themselves. "Some can't take it so they'll take isolation just to get away." or "After prison some can't even take the bus because they are scared of people." This is probably a general phenomenon; we see our own acts as quite self-determined but others' as the result of external factors.

One could speculate perhaps, that claiming responsibility among criminals is a new phenomenon. In Ødegaard's study of Norwegian recidivists from 1941, however, the interviewed inmates also claimed that they were doing what they wanted to and that they were not led by others. The author also notes that even though most in his sample were dependent on alcohol, only a few of the men attributed this as a cause of their criminality.

As for friends, only 4% of the inmates in my study mentioned

friends as a reason for their criminality. I think this is in line with a rather widely-held norm in our society that you should not blame friends, just as you should not blame your parents. Only 27% of the inmates referred to their upbringing, compared to around two-thirds of the control sample. Ødegaard states the same in his study: namely, that even though most of the incarcerated came from what he judged as bad homes, only one out of 39 saw this as a cause or an excuse for himself. My study seems to show parallels with Ødegaard's also in attitudes towards drugs (narcotics and alcohol in mine, alcohol in Ødegaard's) as influencing the interviewees' criminality. Drugs (narcotics) seem to be given comparatively low importance: 18% see them as a cause. For thieves, this figure is lower: 11%. In the taped interviews many of them expressed great contempt towards those who became addicted. The reasoning was that one should be able to use it - not misuse it - or if addicted, quit by oneself. Thirty-nine percent of the addicts, on the other hand, blamed narcotics. Only 11% of all inmates gave alcohol as a reason for why they became criminals. As for blaming society, one respondent said:

It's not society's fault that I'm here [in prison] - it's the good money you can earn through crime. That's why I'm here.

One can speculate whether the approach of studying criminality makes a difference when looking at responsibility. It is rather natural, I guess, that those interested in causality has emphasized external factors. Those who have studied crime as work and have been more interested in criminal lifestyles seem however to be more observant to criminals' own views of why they are involved in crime. Shover and Letkemann are examples of the latter types of scholars. Shover (1971) has consequently noted the importance the "good burglar" (i.e., committed and skilled burglars) gives his own self-determination, while Letkemann who has studied safe-crackers and robbers makes the following comment:

... the true criminal does not steal against his will (any more than the true square-john goes to his work against his will)
... money factors dictated the temporal routine, but the method

of acquiring such money is a matter of perceived choice. (1977: 22)

4.1. Against determinism

In line with arguing for an individual responsibility was a consequent dislike of determinism. I think the following result is a reflection of this.

Table 13. "Once a thief, always a thief."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	11	67	22	100	(36)
All inmates	20	53	27	100	(117)

Here again we see that thieves deny the deterministic view - that there was something forcing them to remain in their present position. It is interesting that traditional thieves are the ones who deny this the most.

The finding that most disagree with the statement "once a thief, always a thief" should not necessarily be taken to mean that the respondents believe that they themselves will go straight. It is possible that some believe that they will stop thieving to become fences when they become older. Bondeson (1974) found, perhaps surprisingly, that only one-third agreed with the statement, "once in jail, always in jail". In addition she found that most criminals in her study thought that others would have difficulties whereas they themselves would "make it".

Finally, most recognized other factors that contributed to their becoming criminals. In the final analysis, however, the respondents stated that it was their own choice, as individuals, which led them into criminality.

Martin's thief in *My Life in Crime* attributes his entry into crime to being around wealthy children in schools whose parents

lived by standards that his own could not afford. He concludes that he got accustomed to things that were "out of his class". Later he joined the navy, and travelled a lot and says he experienced more than peers of the same age.

You take a kid that by the time he's twenty years old, he's traveled around ... and seen what a buck can do, why he wants more things than the average fella would. (1952:8)

However, and this is important, he does not blame any of these circumstances for his becoming a criminal:

I don't blame anyone but myself, I knew much better, I've always known right from wrong as far as that goes, but that part never stopped me or bothered me; it's just a question of whether it's worth while. (Ibid.)

And from another biography, the interviewer asks:

"What really made you a criminal? Do you know?"

"This is the point, isn't it, where I should lay back in my chair, put my feet up on the mantelpiece, and say: 'I never had a chance! But it just wouldn't be true. I don't say I've never had a chance, because I have, I've had plenty of chances if I'd wanted to take them. But I never did.'" (Parker and Allerton 1962:105)

Then he continues to explain some of the processes involved:

I'm always afraid of saying circumstances made me what I am, because I don't think they did entirely at all. Seeing my father, a straight man, getting only poverty all through his life ... living in an environment where nearly everyone I knew was dishonest ... seeing the terrifying dreariness of the lives of other people who were 'straight' ... not being able to face working for a living because I hated the idea of work ... Those were the circumstances, but they were only part of the answer. I still think I'd have been a criminal, whatever they'd been. (Ibid.: 106)

4.2. Ordinary people's explanation

The current vogue among laymen taken from the social sciences, as the criminologist Nettler (1972) has pointed out, is to attribute upbringing, environment, society, i.e., different social forces as possible causes for criminality, instead of putting it on the individual.

Erskine reports that most people in an American poll from 1974 saw upbringing, neighborhood, parental misguidance, etc. as reasons for why individuals became criminals. The blue and white-collar workers in my study shared the same way of looking at these questions. Criminals' upbringing was seen as the main reason for the explanation of crime. "Friends" and "society" had as large a percentage for the blue-collar workers as the alternative "it is their own fault". Among white-collar workers the most common explanation was "their upbringing". Neither drugs or alcohol could really compete among the alternatives, which is interesting, because narcotics have lately been discussed among scientists and others as one of the major correlates to crime.

The well-known sociologists Kellner and Berger (1981) write about the growing tendency to interpret sociology in a general, simplified way as a sort of "scientization" of everyday life. This type of "sociologism", as the authors name it, seems to explain the liberal view the control group took vis-à-vis the reasons why criminals had become what they were.

Nettler comments on the tendency for determinism in criminology:

It is doubtful that any of us can behave as consistent determinists. Free will may be an illusion, and choice too, but most of us regard these illusions as necessary. At least we seem more willing to believe that we decide, while others may be determined. (1978:204)

4.3. Differences between thieves and addicts

The inmates themselves were however not totally alike in their attitudes. Thieves and addicts differed in their views of causality for becoming criminals. Of the addicts, 50% said "It is my own fault", while 74% of the thieves and 71% of the total inmate group took the blame upon themselves. As we shall see later, these differences remain constant for other questions concerning taking an individualistic responsibility. Why then do fewer addicts look upon themselves as responsible?

Coleman (1975), in his dissertation, has pointed out that ad-

diction in itself does not force people to commit crimes, as is usually thought. He gives as an example the American soldiers who became addicted in Vietnam but gave up their addiction once home rather than resort to crime. Another example is the user who is just on the fringes of the subculture and oriented to lighter drug use. Such persons maintain their contacts with the subculture in order to get hold of drugs but do not want to become part of it, and keep the cost of their use low.

Coleman concludes that the street addicts, however, are helped by the general definition of themselves as people who must have their drugs, even if they must resort to crime. This is due to the "common knowledge" that drugs are vital for existence after one has become addicted and one must commit crimes because drugs are so expensive. Junkies themselves are caught up in this self-fulfilling prophecy and thus begin or continue to commit crime.

I think that the view of drugs as just stated above can explain to a large part why the addicts, to a higher degree than thieves, tend to view themselves as not responsible for their criminality.

4.4. Quitting crime or drugs

Table 14. "If someone wants to go straight and succeeds in doing so, what would you think of as a primary cause for this?"

%	All inmates	Control group
Work and housing	41	27
Meeting a girl or starting a family	61	20
That they really want to quit	66	87
To get away from old friends	32	30
N	(137)	(192)

Note: The respondents gave more than one answer to this question. The same is the case in the next table.

Table 15. "If someone wants to quit drugs and succeeds in doing so, what would you think of as a primary cause for this?"

%	All inmates	Control group
Work and housing	41	22
Meeting a girl or starting a family	40	16
That they really want to quit	83	87
To get away from old friends	36	42
N	(131)	(191)

Inmates judge their own self determination as one of the most important factors in quitting both criminality and drugs. The control group agrees; this is somewhat contrary to their belief as to the sources of criminality. For inmates the individual's wish to quit can, however, be seen as more important concerning drug use. I think this might be due to the fact that thieves do not regard themselves as having personal problems; their main reason for wanting to quit is more often for the sake of others.

Many in my sample state that they have had chances to go straight but they have rejected them. A former old thief was even quite upset because he believed that one really got a lot of help if one wanted to go legal. The problem was that so few of them really wished to.

Irwin notes the same individualistic orientation to going straight in his interviews with convicts about to be released:

Most of them expressed the belief that making it is up to the individual, and now that they had decided to try to make it their chances were very good. Most who came back, they believed, don't want to make it. (1970:112)

In Bondeson's study (1974), the inmates seemed to be optimistic.

about their own chances of making it when they came out, while they were more pessimistic concerning other inmates' chances. This might be due to several factors. One is that inmates who state that they want to go straight can be ridiculed (Bondeson 1974). Such an atmosphere probably leads to beliefs that others do not really want to quit. My interviews with former criminals confirmed that a decision or wish to quit is not something one talks too much about in prison. An individualistic optimism might also be necessary if an inmate intends to make it legally. After all, he knows of friends who have planned to go straight but anyhow have returned to prison repeatedly.

In an article about future orientation, delinquents felt that their futures depended on their own actions to a higher degree than did non-delinquents. The authors' interpretation of the results seems highly plausible:

One may also assume that expectation of internal control may reflect the belief of institutionalized delinquents that following release they will have to confront reintegration into society without much help from others. The strictly regulated time in prison being over, they will have to plan and be responsible for themselves. (Trommsdorff and Lamm 1980:271)

The perspective of seeing future developments as due to one's own acts can thus be seen as both realistic and instrumental.

4.5. Getting a job after prison

The inmates were asked what type of work they wanted after they got out of prison. Those who specified the type of work they wanted were then asked if they thought they would get it. The alternatives were formulated as yes-because and no-because alternatives, and were posed in such a way as to see what emphasis the inmates put on instrumental reasons of a practical kind and to what extent they were optimistic about getting a job as a result of their own efforts. The no-alternatives, taken from arguments about the difficulties for inmates to get

jobs, were provided by the inmates themselves in taped interviews and referred to in criminological literature.

Table 16. "Do you think you will work with any of these jobs when you get out?"

%

Yes, because I

made a decision	33
have the education	14
worked with that before	36
have contacts	17

Total number that have given a yes answer: 82

%

No, because

no one wants to employ a former inmate	7
too much unemployment	10
lack of education	15
can not "take" a job or do not really want a job	8

Total number who have given a no answer: 31

Have not answered the question 8

The percentage is based on the total of 121
those who stated some type of work they
wanted

Note: More than one alternative has been given so the sums
can not be added. A few gave both yes answers and no
answers.

That one had made a decision was seen as important by as many
as a third of those who said they wanted a job. The result fits
in the overall individualistic perspective that criminals seem

to hold - a sort of existential attitude.

It is interesting that relatively few believe that they will not get the job they want. The most common answer is "no, because I do not have the education", which is in line with the fact that this group have a generally lower education than the rest of the population.² Some had also mentioned jobs as "social worker", "photographer", etc., where it was evident that they did not have the necessary specialized education. In those cases, of course, difficulties in finding the job was not due to a general low education. Of interest for this study is, however, the fact that relatively few state "no one will employ a former prisoner", which should have been in line with "the denial of responsibility"-answer. One should remember in this context that many inmates state that they do not want a job.

Table 17. "It's nice if you can avoid work."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
All inmates	35	47	18	100	(110)
Control group	7	87	6	100	(198)

This result is consistent with Bondeson's (1974), where one-third of the interviewed inmates stated that they did not want a regular job after their time was up. According to her, the reasons were that they dislike work after being in prison or that they consider their opportunities for getting a job as bad. I, on the other hand, interpret these results as indicating rather a truthful account of their attitudes - that they simply prefer not to work, at least not for the time being.

When I presented my questionnaire, in order to motivate the inmates to participate, I said something like, "It is important to know what type of work you want to have after you are released." A few laughed and said, "No one here wants a job, forget about that." Even if this is not true of everyone, it is important to recognize that some do not strive to acquire a legal job - at least not the type they can get and not for the

moment.

4.6. A man should be able to take care of his finances

Thieves can be described as wanting to be "providers". This was sometimes expressed by a rather old-fashioned way of looking at the man as the provider. See Table 22) An older thief told me that the first thing he said to his wife when she worried about their finances was, "Daddy'll take care of that," whereafter he went out and stole. And from an American biography, we learn why prostitutes like thieves:

Prostitutes are attracted by a thief. For one thing he is a provider and they like that. (Chambliss and King 1972:14)

Considering attitudes like these, it is not surprising that the inmates did not differ from those asked by SIFO:

Table 18. "You have yourself to blame if your finances are bad."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
All inmates	52	28	21	100	(114)
SIFO	52	29	19	100	(125)

Although thieves and addicts did not differ on this question, there does seem to be a difference between them: addicts cannot be described as "providers" as they "provide" for themselves only, in more or less socially acceptable ways:

On the block, there is a distinction between an addict and a junkie. An addict has pride. A junkie will stoop to anything to support his habit: "He'll hustle his own sister. That's disgusting ... I feel that if you have a habit, support it ... Be a man about it ... If you go to steal, go steal. It's a job like any other job. You make faster money, and you deprive people of other things, but it's a job." ... They require certain skills and stealing is one of them. (Burnham 1970:158)

In *Portrait from a Shooting Gallery*, Fiddle also notes that

addicts have "an individualism of their own":³

If one talks long enough to addicts, one discovers that they do have an individualism of their own ... they put down the man who is a beggar, who does not forage his own heroin. Secondly, an addict will argue that he is "responsible" for keeping up his habit. That is to say, he will go out and steal, and so on, and do all the things a good hustler would do in order to get the money he needs to support himself. (1967:49)

The view that each should take care of his own financial situation sometimes fosters a rather condescending attitude towards those who do not succeed in this: Letkemann presents an armed robber's attitude towards the "young punks". In contrast to "those who get into serious crime", he referred to those who are unsuccessful - "They don't pull their own weight either working, stealing or anything". This resembles the inmates' description of prison guards as being "too lazy to work and too yellow to steal". (1973:24)

An older man in my study, looking a bit worn, made the rather degrading statement about the poor: "I feel sorry for them." Obviously he did not see himself as belonging to that group. This condescending attitude can sometimes become a sort of impatience with those who accept their poverty. After having committed a burglary in a rich aristocrat's house, this thief says:

I remember after I'd come out I passed an old man in rags, standing on the street-corner scraping at a violin to try and earn himself a few coppers, and I thought: you mug, why don't you go in there and at least get yourself a good sleep in one of his Lordship's unused beds for a night. (Parker and Allerton 1962:89)

With the background of criminals' wanting to take care of their own finances, I posed a question about the attitude to social welfare.

Table 19. "It's okay to take social welfare."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	46	41	14	100	(37)
Addicts	65	18	18	100	(17)
Control group	27	45	28	100	(198)

Inmates are more inclined to see social welfare as "okay", but traditional thieves hold a more individualistic view concerning coping with one's own finances. They also resemble the control group more than the addicts. As many of them actually disagreed to social welfare as of the control sample.

I think the number of thieves who morally disagree might be a bit higher than indicated due to the fact that they actually have been in situations where they have had to ask for social welfare money. An indication of this is that the "no opinion" alternative is less frequently chosen by inmates while almost a third of the control group have chosen that alternative. Judging from the taped interviews, a more ideal attitude seemed to be exemplified in this statement of an older thief.

I don't see myself as having any duties towards society, therefore I don't think I have any rights either.

Similarly, Letkemann reports on a criminal who would rather choose crime than "...collect social welfare and be a nuisance for the rest of my life." (1973:22)

I think there is a difference here between the group norms of thieves and those of addicts. A respondent who had been a thief at first and who became an addict later explained that among thieves it was degrading to take social welfare when one could steal. But after he became addicted, he became a less skilled thief and had to resort to social welfare, where he in a short time learned to manipulate the assistants. These skills were something in that lifestyle to be proud of and brag about among friends.

The norms among traditional thieves concerning supporting oneself are in line with their view of success in the light of the American Dream.

Table 20. "It is up to you whether you will succeed or not, everyone is his own fortune-maker."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	76	8	16	100	(37)
All inmates	61	19	20	100	(129)
Blue-collar workers	51	26	23	100	(103)
White-collar workers	71	14	15	100	(93)

It is interesting that the traditional thief group is closer to the white-collar group than the blue-collar one although its social background more closely resembles that of the latter. Here, I think it is important to note that the white-collar workers come from a private company and not a governmental organization. The group includes quite a large percentage of people placed in leading positions. That is, the group is not typical for a normal Swedish white-collar sample and might be more "achievement-oriented". (The attitude of succeeding through one's own efforts is further elaborated on in the chapter on business orientation.)

4.7. Taking the consequences: prison

I'll willingly gamble away a third of my life in prison, so long as I can live the way I want for the other two-thirds.⁴

This attitude - being willing to "pay" for being a criminal, one that may seem strange for an outsider - also appeared among my respondents. In an effort to measure how common it was, I posed the following question:

Table 21. "If you live as a criminal, it's only fair that you pay by being in prison once in a while."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	59	22	19	100	(37)
Modern thieves	42	35	23	100	(43)
Mixed	21	37	42	100	(19)
Addicts	18	50	33	100	(18)

Again, traditional thieves are those prone to take individual responsibility. It is obviously easier to accept a prison sentence for the more committed criminals, who to a higher degree than the others see their lifestyle as a choice. A young thief who describes the advantages of crime in terms of free time, etc., made the following comment:

That's how I want to live and it's my own fault ... A person can't demand treatment for his addiction or his criminality.

And he goes on to say that since he has chosen this life he is willing to take the "porridge" (slang for prison).

When asked about the right or wrongness of prisons, the interviewed thieves usually did not even elaborate the question but stated simply: "What should we have instead?" Thus, most took our laws and punishments for granted, seeing them as necessary for society in general.⁵ As exemplified in the interview below, most also resented a view of themselves as "sick" or in need of "help". (Since it was a group interview, the respondents have been given numbers.)

"If someone is supporting himself on crime, is it then right that he has to do time?"

1: "Yeah, sure, if you live like this."

2: "Yeah, how would it be otherwise? ... You have to take the consequences."

1: "That's right."

2: "But it's different with the cruel crimes, like rapes and stuff, they should be at a mental hospital."

1: "But sometimes they do it strangely, placing someone in

mental hospitals. This time when I was busted, I was given a mental examination. I told them I didn't need it, it's ridiculous ..."

The interviewee above thus thinks that being placed in a mental institution would be beneath his dignity. His commitment is rather uncomplicated as he considers himself smart: he has supported himself mainly on sickness benefits for ten years while doing some "small jobs" on the side. During this time he lived together with a non-criminal woman who tried to make him work, which he refused to do. He is also a bit proud of being able to take the prison sentence. "You know, it's not everybody who can take it. It's just certain kinds of people." He can be compared to another man, whom I would label more of an addict, who told me how he tried to cheat them into placing him at a mental hospital because this usually meant shorter sentences.

Coupled with an acceptance of prison sentences is the norm among thieves that one should know in advance what one is gambling with. (Shover 1971). This is even expressed in statements about those who use heroin. "They knew what they began to play with and I don't like this thing of feeling sorry for them. Feeling sorry, feeling sorry, it's always that crap," as a young self-righteous thief expressed it.

4.8. Prison as an occupational hazard

For the committed criminals, prison sentences can be seen as an occupational hazard and thus made less dramatic. This is, of course, not totally uncomplicated. Even those who saw it this way talked about the problems of imprisonment, reflecting on the fact that they could spend so much time in prison that their criminality in the end would not be worth it. But quite a few saw it as a part of their life that even had certain advantages: one met old friends, got regular meals, etc.

One respondent said that he did not even get upset any more when arrested: "It's just packing my things and then I'm in again

for a while. I don't count days and after a while I'm out again. It really doesn't bother me anymore." This man had not become, as far as I could judge, institutionalized,⁶ so that explanation does not seem to be valid. Besides, he had spent quite a long time outside between sentences and had a wife whom he cared for.

Further illustrations from a biography:

If you're a criminal, what's the alternative to the risk of going to prison? Coal-miners don't spend their time worrying about the fact that they might get killed by a fall at the coal-face either. Prison's an occupational risk, that's all. (Parker and Allerton 1962:88)

Another thief, in *Occupation: Thief*, when talking about leaving prison, relates to it in a similar way:

It was hardly a unique situation. In fact, these exits and entrances were the occupational hazards of my chosen trade. (MacKenzie 1955:7)

The process of becoming a committed criminal is probably further facilitated after experiencing, as some stated they did, that prison was not as bad as they had thought before being there. Both Shover (1971) and West (1974) point out that some of the interviewed thieves in their studies also saw their first prison sentence in this light.

Finally, the legitimacy of the police can be taken for granted as seen in the following. An elderly robber, complaining about the youngsters in the game:

These prisoners nowadays, they blame the police because they got caught. Well, what are the police supposed to do? Not catch 'em?⁷

Most interviewees in my study expressed the same feeling though they did not always agree with the methods used by the police. They were quite upset, for instance, when they thought the police had harassed them unnecessarily or used faked evidence against them.

4.9. Blaming oneself if one gets caught

Among self-respecting criminals, a tendency to blame oneself for getting caught is quite usual. A safe-cracker, for example, stated that he had got caught "because of the luck of the police and his own carelessness".

This tendency is probably due to two main factors. The first is that the structure of their work is highly non-organized and individualistic. Criminal projects are usually planned and carried out alone or in small groups where membership varies. If they have associates, they should have chosen these properly, one should know whom to trust. One rule, for example, is never trust an addict. There is no opportunity to blame an organization or decisions above one's head, as most of us in conventional work can do. The other factor is that this individualistic performance gives you credit as well as blame. If one does not blame oneself in situations where one has lost, one cannot, to the same extent, take credit and be proud of the successful operations one has carried out.

In criminal work there is thus a need to rely on one's own versatility, on knowing whom to trust, whom to sell to, etc. One small mistake can lead to failure:

Being arrested is usually the result of a combination of wrong moves and bad luck. Picking poor angles, not 'casing' a job thoroughly, engaging a bad partner, failing in skill (not picking a lock or letting goods slip from a coat while shoplifting, etc.), making noise -- the list goes on endlessly. (West 1974: 200)

Avoiding these mistakes is up to the individual and he should have planned well enough, have thought things over or be quick to correct his mistakes - otherwise he has failed. On the other hand, some criminals tend to use "the law of averages" (Shover 1971) to blame their arrests or incarcerations, which is a more deterministic way of looking at it. This means that sooner or later, if you persist in crime, you will get caught. The majority in my study did believe that those continuing with criminal activities would get caught at some time. The individual's mis-

takes were still seen, however, as the primary reason for getting caught. In analyzing a single crime, the individual's mistakes were discussed. These two themes - of mistakes due to fate or the individual's acts - are nicely illustrated in an interview by Letkemann. When questioned whether it is the less successful who end up doing a lot of time, an inmate replies as follows:

No, no - I wouldn't say that ... some of the best did a lot of time. But I would think it's just due to a person's own fault, or maybe carelessness ... Or maybe too much activity. (1973:37)

Too much activity is of course also due to individualistic decisions. A young man in my study who vacillated between wanting to go straight and wanting to remain in his lifestyle, believed that if he chose the second alternative, he would not commit as many crimes as he previously had done. He had been "too ambitious" and gave this as the cause for his now being incarcerated.

Shover interprets this feeling of personal failure as a result of being arrested as due to a belief in infallibility and technical omnipotence. The perfect crime can be done since it depends on careful planning in advance. He describes this type of burglar as:

To them a plan of attack possesses a meaning and value far beyond its instrumental one. Like the canoes of the Trobrianders, they embody a supreme faith in the inevitable safety and success of the venture. (1971:120)

One could argue that this faith is instrumental in itself since both these groups' ventures are to a high degree built on chance; hence, the faith in success is needed if the venture is going to get off the ground at all.

Getting caught seems to be a mixture of strong emotions - annoyance with oneself, for some - and consideration of past mistakes.

"When you're arrested, what are your reactions at that moment?"
"I think the first thing's annoyance - with myself. How could I be so stupid to get nicked. What's gone wrong, what have I forgotten, where have I made the mistake?" (Parker and Allerton 1962:149)

This way of thinking over mistakes can of course be instrumental. One learns the hard way and tries to foresee potentially dangerous elements in advance. Even if these lessons are not always successful:

What caused me to commit crime is the thing I suppose every person that's truthful about it will admit: thinking the next guy got caught, but I won't. I can see his mistake. He shouldn't have done so and so. So I come along and pull a crime and make another mistake. I think within myself, I made that mistake, but when I pull this next trick I will be straight. So I make another mistake. (Jackson 1972:166)

4.10. Reaction against therapy

Since criminals see their criminality and their lifestyle as their own decision, being therapeutically "treated" appears quite strange.

Several scholars have also pointed out how committed criminals react towards therapy. Nettler (1978) even refers to "the tyranny of therapy". Cressey (1978) emphasizes the importance of self as one of the few things left during incarceration. Irwin (1970) describes inmates' hostility towards explanations in line with an emotional disturbance model (a non-responsible model) to account for criminality. The quotes below come from two autobiographies:

For me there was never any escape from group therapy, since I was always quite candid in admitting that I was a thief because I had a marked aversion to the 40-hour week. This didn't go over at all well in a system geared to the premise that a thief is never a thief through preference, but through the workings of a warped id. Nature's abhorance of a vacuum, I tell you, is as nothing compared to the psychologist's loathing of a simple and direct explanation. (MacIsaacs 1968:69)

And a reaction towards "those who tried to help" - "the do-gooders"

... they are all so anxious to jump in and tell me what I should do, how I should do it, what I ought to think instead of what I do think. How, if we're going to get right down to it, I really ought to want to become much more like them. Well, I don't.
(Parker and Allerton 1962:143)

Therapy can thus be described as a type of "imperialistic abstractionism" by defining values of the actor as right or wrong - not the specific acts or behaviors according to formal ground such as breaking the law.⁸

Treatment or therapy, however, not only blames the mental state, but more commonly, one's background. Degrading one's background and especially one's family, who are usually the most important of the significant others, is in a way degrading you.⁹ Cressey has mentioned that he thought that the statement "Don't blame my mother, blame me" was getting more usual among criminals and young militant Blacks.¹⁰ This fits in with the interviewed criminals defending their parents even after they had described pretty tough treatment from them.

Allerton relates a typical conversation with one of these do-gooders (psychiatrists, priests, prison visitors, welfare workers, etc.):

"Now do you really think, honestly, that this keeping on going back to prison all the time is worth it? (Of course they don't mean 'honestly' at all. When I say honestly that I do, they can't believe I mean it.)"

"But you don't want to spend all your life in prison, do you?"
"No."

"Well, then ..."

"I'm not going to spend all my life in prison. I've only spent a third of it there, up to now. You said 'all'."

"All right, then, a third - do you think that's worth it?"

"Yes."

...

"Haven't you any sense of responsibility, or desire for security?"

"No."

"Don't you want to be like other people and work for your living?"

"No." (Parker and Allerton 1962:141-42)

4.11. Different factors related to responsibility

Why then is individual responsibility seen as being so important? Among many factors, I will discuss two - that of being a grown-up and that of manliness.

4.11.1. Age

Klockars (1974) describes how the fence Vincent whom he studied saw the people buying from and selling to him as being grown-up people who made their own decisions. Therefore he had no remorse or feelings of guilt. Furthermore, he viewed his own life with a similar sense of individual responsibility.

In very much the same way, the respondents in my study saw age as important in the sense that being a grown-up implies making decisions by oneself. When you are grown up, you no longer have any excuses to fall back on.

Even the most unfortunate case in my own opinion among those I interviewed claimed that after he had grown up, he was the one responsible for continuing with crime. He was rather atypical from the rest of the population, and was a "perfect" example of a disastrous background and upbringing: his parents were alcoholics, his father beat him and he had been at bad foster homes, and at an old-fashioned mental hospital where they had put a straight-jacket on him at the age of twelve. My sympathetic remark after hearing the whole story was: "Well, then it's quite natural to become defiant?" His reply is interesting in the present context:

"Well, yeah, but during later years I've chosen this life."
"You've chosen it yourself?"
"Yes I have. I'm so old now that I know what I'm doing ... but at that age [as an adolescent] one did not think too much."

This young man wanted to go straight but thought he might be too old: he was twenty-four. Another young man in his early twenties also saw himself as deciding now about his criminality

"because when you were young, you were a 'super criminal' but then society taught you and said 'naughty boy, that's not how to behave'. And at that point you learned and chose." And still another young man thought that one was only influenced by friends while young:

"No one drags me into anything if I don't want it."

"But when you were younger?"

"Yeah, but when you were young, you believed in those who were older and wanted to live up to their ... It's easy to cheat you before you've got your own experiences. But then at last you're on your own feet, then you don't care about what others think. If others won't accept me as I am, then I don't care because you can't change just in order to satisfy others. And if you keep a hard line you'll be more respected."

Quite a few of the respondents talked about how they had been independent very early. "Too early", said some. It might be that this group had had to be grown-up very early. Here there seems to be a class difference. In Persson and Dahlgren's book (1975) on youth in Sweden, it is reported that 8% of ten and twelve-year olds do not wish to leave their childhood. This group mainly consists of children from the upper class. Gans (1962), on the other hand, describes the lower class Italian children he studied as miniature grown-ups. Werthman (1969) describes a demand for independence and a wish to be taken seriously (not as children) as typical for the delinquent children and youth that he has studied. Finally B-E Andersson's (1982) study of ordinary young people in Sweden can be referred to where (rather amazingly) only a quarter of 20 and 21-year olds saw themselves as grown-ups. At the age of 23, this had increased to 60%. Even though I do not have any statistical evidence from criminals in this matter, I am rather sure the percentage would have been higher.

4.11.2. _Manliness

Many of the thieves or non-addicted criminals struck me as quite "macho"-directed, e.g., "I don't want my wife to work, one's home is one's own territory." In short, they want to be viewed as men. Taking this into account, a denial of responsibility would be rather unmanly.

Table 22. "In my opinion the man is the one who should support the family."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	42	28	31	100	(37)
Addicts	17	45	39	100	(19)
Control group	18	60	22	100	(198)

Thieves can in this sense be said to adhere to a quite old-fashioned manliness ideal. They differ a lot from the control sample at Alfa-Laval, whose opinion probably resembles more of the typical view in Sweden today where most women work.

As for those addicts who have passed through the stages of the hippie movement and its marijuana philosophy, manliness is clearly irrelevant if not negative. Being very controlled by drugs and having this as one's center in life also excludes, I guess, concern about being viewed as "manly" or not.

Inmates on the whole, and especially thieves, also agreed to a higher extent than the control group to the statement "A man ought to put the interest of his wife and children above his own". 59% of the thieves agreed compared to 24% of the sample from Alfa-Laval. Finally, traditional thieves did not appreciate those who did not want to do their military service (which is compulsory in Sweden) - even more so in fact, than the control sample from SIFO. This I see as yet another expression of "manliness" (apart from other reasons of nationalism, etc.).

Table 23. "The refusal to carry arms and go to war is admirable."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	23	66	11	100	(35)
Modern thieves	40	41	19	100	(42)
Mixed	22	28	50	100	(18)
Addicts	61	11	29	100	(18)
SIFO	24	53	23	100	(125)

These questions above are of course not a thorough examination of what manliness is or is perceived to be but can be seen as some illustrations of how male thieves tend to see themselves as "real men". And it can further be viewed as one factor influencing this group in valuing individual responsibility since the two concepts are so closely connected in our civilization. Finally it must be emphasized that the questions refer to values and views, not to actual behavior. If one were to measure the percentage of thieves who actually do serve in the military, my guess is that it would be lower than that of non-thieves. The same can, probably, be said for the items concerning who is to support the family. When they answered the questionnaire, some initially agreed that this was the man's business but after a while they changed their answers because they acknowledged the fact that when they were in prison, their girlfriends or wives were really doing it.

4.12. Possible reasons

4.12.1. _It_is_functional_for_the_group_if_the_individual_takes_his_responsibility

Art Pepper tells about an occasion when he and two other, more experienced, thieves were dividing the take after a burglary:

We counted up the money. They were going to throw the checks away but I said, 'No, let me have them.' They said, 'You know you've got to be awfully careful. You've got to hold them for a while, and when you finally do pass them you've got to be careful where you pass them. And if anything happens, that's you. Period.' I said, 'I know that. You don't have to worry about me.' They said, 'Well, you've been in prison. You know what it's all about.' (1979:233)

The norm of not ratting and everyone taking care of himself is of course due to group necessity. If this norm did not exist, our prisons would be even more overcrowded.¹¹ Therefore, one should know what one is doing in advance. Shover (1971) points out the existence of this norm among thieves, that risks should

be calculated.

Einstadter (1969) reports for example about one informant saying, when asked about obligations towards members in a gang who have been arrested, that one does not go into armed robbery blind to the risks and if caught, one should be prepared to handle the situation on one's own and accept the consequences.

Secondly, as was pointed out earlier, for the individual living as a criminal, there is not much choice other than to rely on his own resources. This is usually the case after he leaves prison. Contrary to most ordinary people, who, for example, leave a hospital and who have a family, a job, etc., waiting, the former inmate does not have this type of safety net. His own efforts will make or break him - in crime or otherwise. The same is true concerning planning and executing a criminal job. It would be hazardous if criminals relied too much on each other. If one is escaping and hiding out with others, for example, one will make the place "hot".

Letkemann (1973) accounts the norm of "doing your own time" to the fact that inmates are in a position where they can offer each other little help. Another reason for the rather hard attitude is that they have enough problems of their own without taking on someone else's.

4.12.2. _Action-seekers_

Goffman has written about how people in fateful action-oriented situations tend to perceive these as wilful undertakings.

Those with faithful duties sometimes hold themselves to be self-respecting men who aren't afraid to put themselves on the line ... They have a more or less secret contempt for those with safe and secure jobs who need never face real tests of themselves. They claim they are not only willing to remain in jobs full of opportunity and risk, but have deliberately sought out this environment, declining to accept safe alternatives, being able, willing, and even inclined to live in a challenge. (1967: 182)

As examples he gives occupations such as burglars and pick-pockets, croupiers, small-scale fishermen, bee-keepers. A typical group of action-seekers are gamblers. Criminals often see themselves as gamblers, and life itself as a game to be played with gains and losses.¹²

The interviewees were asked to choose one of the following statements as being most representative of their life philosophy:

Table 24. "Life is like a game where one can win or lose." (Game)
 "Life goes on without our being able to do much about it, just take one day at a time." (Fate)
 "In general, one can plan one's life, at least in the long run." (Planning)

%	Game	Fate	Planning	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	45	24	32	100	(38)
Addicts	24	29	47	100	(17)
All inmates	40	28	32	100	(139)
Blue-collar workers	17	30	54	100	(101)
White-collar workers	17	14	69	100	(93)

Criminals thus attribute less to fate than blue-collar workers do. Gambling on the other hand is the most common alternative. Gambling, it should be remembered, is opposite to fate in that it is something that concerns decisions.

Life in general, then, seems to be looked upon quite differently from the perspective of the criminal than from that of ordinary people. A young "modern thief":

You see, we are gamblers, we who're here [in prison]. Most addicts and thieves are. We play with our lives as stakes.

And then he goes on to say that this is reflected in the fact that they actually do gamble concretely, i.e., poker, slot-

machines, etc. One way of dealing with fatefulness as described by Goffman (1967) is to ascribe the outcome of actions as due to fate. The results above are interesting in the way that criminals do not seem to consider fate as a vital determinant in life - not more than the blue-collar group. This view is, I think, important in that criminals are not passively awaiting the outcome of fate - even if they do not see life as something that one can carefully plan, - but something one can gamble with - win or lose.

It is interesting that Miller's (1958) thesis of the lower-class' culture emphasizing fate as one "focal concern" is not given any support here, since the differences between the groups concerning "fate" is not dramatic.

The following statements illustrate how this gambling is perceived as voluntary. An older versatile man who has been engaged in "everything", smuggling, dealing, having a legal business ...

Life is a gamble, you can't predict everything in detail. You have done a drawing sort of, and then the run starts so to say and after that you'll just have to see how it works out ... I don't really like planning.

A young thief:

"Do you like to take chances?"

"Yeah, absolutely."

"Why?"

"Well ... it's excitement and it can pay off."

A larger share of the inmate group than those from the SIFO sample stated that they liked taking chances. (See Table 44.)

A few quotes to illustrate how crime as opposed to life in general can be perceived as gambling and chance-taking. An older guy calling himself a jack-of-all-trades, whose main line is being a con man:

"Have you sometimes reasoned like 'Okay, I'm committing crimes and I know they're punishable, but I'll take that?'"

"I have reasoned like that but then I've been thinking like I don't give a damn. I can get busted but I might make it as well, it's a fifty-fifty chance."

"Is it worth taking that risk?"

"Yeah! If you don't wanna work ... if you don't take a chance you won't get anything."

Another man who has been involved in drug dealing and fencing:

"Sometimes things just happen. It's opportunities and chances. If you come into contact with someone and he says, 'This is the way it works, do you want to buy it?' Well, if you have the dough you'll buy. Many times you don't plan it ..."

"Take advantage of the situation?"

"As a rule, yeah ..."

4.12.2.1. *Action as self-determined*

As was shown above, being involved with action-oriented activities is often perceived as being voluntary undertakings.

... action is to be found wherever the individual knowingly takes consequential chances perceived as avoidable. (Goffman 1967:194)

Goffman exemplifies with competitive, commercialized sports activities where the individual is seen as free to choose whether he wishes to participate or not. Sports car racers voluntarily accept their risks even if the races are very businesslike in their organization and the individual is making his living out of it. It is felt that he could have taken another job, so that the chance-taking is voluntary. Similarly, criminals, in spite of the current "sociologism" (Kellner and Berger 1981), can be seen today as having other alternatives. If one as a criminal is attracted to the elements of action in the criminal life, it is therefore logical that one prefers this view to that of someone who cannot really help himself but acts by responding to forces outside himself.

In comparison, it would sound pretty ludicrous if the sports car racer stated that he was forced into this way of living by

his upbringing, by a society that did not give him other chances, and so on. Similarly, the criminal who appreciates the criminal life, at least in comparison to ordinary life, "... where chance-taking tends to be organized out" (Goffman 1967:195), would be equally ridiculed by his friends and lose his self-image if he were to claim the same.

4.12.2.2. *Action and responsibility*

In casino gambling when a player makes a large bet and loses it he sometimes speaks of what he did as "blowing it". Thus to engage in action unsuccessfully is to "blow it". (Goffman 1967:193)

Thus, it is the individual who blows it - he does not, which would be the most likely according to common sense, attribute the losses to the insecurity in the game itself. The implication according to Goffman is that neither the possession of the stake nor the loss was particularly justified or legitimate. Even if one's loss is bad for one's self-image, one can fairly easily excuse oneself for making it. This is probably the basis for being able to state "I blew it", i.e., the non-seriousness in the midst of serious gambling - which resembles the experience of adventure. (Simmel 1971)

Criminals can similarly be seen as not seriously planning a future in crime. Most of them are committed for a while and a criminal lifestyle can thus be seen as an adventure - at least when they are young.¹³ Only about a fifth in my study saw it as possible in the long run to support oneself on crime. There was no great difference between the different groups.

4.12.2.3. *Character*

Goffman (1967) points to the connection between action and character. One character trait is courage. This is exemplified in what professional gamblers call "gamble" - a willingness to submit to the rules of the game while chancing a major portion

of one's capital and carrying the gain or loss with grace. It seems to be the same mechanism involved in the righteous criminal's willingness to "pay" with a sentence if his luck or skills betray him.

The code of the committed thief demands that he has already weighed the risks of what he is involved in. Subsequently the individual should be prepared to take the consequences.

There is little sympathy for the man who reacts with shock and weakness of character when arrested and sentenced to prison ... In the prisons of Illinois too oft-repeated admonitions are sure to greet the man who complains of his adversity. "If you wanna' play, you gotta' pay"; and "If you can't do the time, don't do the crime". (Shover 1971:117) (my underlining)

This contempt towards those who "can't take it" is, I think, based on the feelings expressed by those who want to be the action-seeker, who voluntarily seek action but who also can handle the possible drawbacks of it. Blaming one's act on someone else means that you withdraw the positive image of yourself both as someone who is daring but also as someone who can accept the self-determination inherent in occupations that involve action. It means also giving up the freedom and independence that most of the committed criminals stated they craved. Giving up one's self-control and self-determination would in this sense seriously damage one's self.

When the interviewed thieves talked about addicts, they did not refer to the fact that someone used drugs or even that they were addicted to drugs; rather, addicts were those who lacked moral strength of "character".

A "righteous" thief:

If a man is going to use dope I look at that like anything else: use it, and use as much discretion as possible. But when you get a pop, don't go screaming about everybody else is a damn fool or they're square because they're persecuting you for using it. Just say 'I done used it, I got caught, it's against the laws of society and conventional-thinking people, so now I got to serve the consequences', go pay'em. (Jackson 1972:165)

That one should not fuss about one's drug use was something most of the "righteous criminals" in this study also emphasized. Those who did not employ discretion while using drugs in prison, for example, were looked down upon. A young man who sees himself as a thief, but who has tried different types of drugs and been addicted to amphetamine, is thus quite upset about addicts' tendencies to lose self-control. Both thieves and addicts should "accept what they are" and keep their dignity.

Okay, even if you're an addict you should keep your human dignity and not sell out like they do. It's actually happened that I've bought a color TV at the time when you got good money for them from one of them and gave him one capsule just so that he could get the drug inside him ... And that's an uncontrolled addict, see ... Well, he should see to it that he gets straight in his head again and not sell out like that ... The years I used drugs I never felt I had to get it, had to, you know. Not on uppers. Okay the heroinist, he can't ... Well, I've taken that as well and I don't like it. I think the heroinist is an idiot. I won't give you one penny for someone like that because he knows that if he takes the drug he'll get hooked physically.

The moral is thus that even though you might get hooked, you should have enough sense to get yourself straight if you use uppers. If one uses heroin, the blame is totally the individual's, knowing the danger of the drug. Flirting with drugs can be seen as getting involved in "fateful situations". These situations can be seen as chances for displaying character. Going through a chancy situation, which people involved in action often see as being undertaken voluntarily, as seen above, is a chance to display pride. And it is precisely this that addicts are seen as lacking. The true criminals, on the other hand, can be seen as taking advantage of situations "when the chips are down", e.g., as Shover (1971) has pointed out, when being arrested.

... it is during moments of action that the individual has the risk and opportunity of displaying to himself and sometimes to others his style of conduct when the chips are down. (Goffman 1967:237)

It is no coincidence that true criminals sometimes approvingly, in their world, are called "characters". The type of prison one has been to can also serve as a proof of manhood. Having done

time at a tough prison can serve as one sign of being a "right guy". In my study "Norrköping" was seen in this way. The inmates there were the "real guys", those who were to be trusted and who felt a true commitment.

Allerton - a righteous thief - was asked if bringing back "the cat" (a harsh form of punishment no longer used in Britain) would change the attitudes toward punishment among criminals. He replied that it would not. The ones he knew who had received that punishment only became more vicious and

... in certain cases it's increased their standing in the criminal world, they're quite proud of it and look on themselves like heroes, like - well, fighter pilots in the battle of Britain, something of that sort. (Parker and Allerton 1962:102)

Werthman has used Goffman's concept of character and character contest as related to action-seeking among young gang members. He notes how the gangs he studied took pride in their own style. The gang who did not get arrested as often as others saw itself as "smarter". But for the purpose here, another gang, whose members were incarcerated more often, is more interesting because it took pride in being able to take risks.

... reputation increases with the fatefulness of the situation in which a boy is willing to take a risk, and the boys who have been sent to the more important prisons can flaunt this fact as evidence that they have paid and were willing to pay a more significant price for maintaining their identity on the street. (1969:628)

4.12.3. _Marginal man

The concept of marginal man was first developed by Park. He saw, for example, the Jew in modern society as "... a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies ..." (1950:354). Stonequist developed the concept in his book *The Marginal Man* (1937) where he dealt with the problems of being 'inbetween' as was the case for the mulatto or the educated blacks. Both authors over-emphasized the problems and personal difficulties

connected with a marginal position. (Shibutani 1961:577). Other types of marginality have subsequently been described, such as the foreman, the military chaplain, the chiropractor and the Japanese-Americans. Many of these studies have reported that the holders of these positions have revealed few serious inner conflicts. (Ibid.:577-78)

Even though criminals are not usually labelled as "marginal men", I think a lot of them can be described as such. Seeing them as marginal men can, I think, help to explain both why criminals often argue with emphasis that they themselves have chosen their life and why they state a responsibility for this.

People who occupy a marginal status are continually confronted with the necessity of forming moral judgements. Situations that would be routine for other people call for choice, often a choice between different conceptions of what is right. (Ibid.:578)

In many ways criminals can be seen as marginal men. In the first place, even those who appear highly committed to their criminal life for the moment had tried at one point or another to live a straight life. Sixty-one percent stated that they had lived a square life.¹⁴ Few wanted their children to live like they had done. A fifth said they usually socialized with their family which was described as "straight", and a third with ordinary people, when they were out of prison. The majority of the group had mainly supported themselves through legal work.¹⁵

Many of the interviewees also wanted to quit their criminal life at some point in the future - even if they did not want a job that was seen as dull. The main reason as to why they wanted to quit was for their parents', or wife and children's sake. A further example, as I see it, of marginality is that a fourth of the inmates stated that those who managed to live like the squares but supported themselves by crime, were appreciated and respected.

All this indicates that criminals do not live in a closed culture where norms are taken for granted. This can of course be difficult at times - but not necessarily as Park and Stonequist

described it. The strain might result more from practical considerations. Some said, for example, that it was hard to change language when one came out. Some did not want to associate with criminals on the outside because it was like being around "shop talk" all the time. Besides they meant that criminals are often problematic people, and they had enough of this inside. The most extreme example I heard of someone being in a marginal position was a safe-cracker who at one time had had a company of his own with thirteen employees. To manage the firms' finances he had to be out stealing at nights.

The marginal position that criminals occupy causes, I think, choices to be made with a higher degree of awareness than most of us have to use in our lives where a higher degree of decisions is taken for granted. (Berger and Luckmann 1972). The criminal life is also continuously questioned by others. If the criminals are to continue, they are more or less forced to explain this to themselves or others, something most of us in conventional work need not do.

Nor does it seem any longer to be the case that a criminal gets socialized into the criminal world through neighborhood associates, etc. which would provide the individual criminal with a taken-for-granted "safety net" which would make conscious decisions unnecessary since activities would not be questioned by him or by those around him.

Another circumstance that makes for a higher awareness of choice is that one knows that both types of lives have drawbacks.¹⁶ Going straight means a disinvestment (Prus and Sharper 1977) of skills, contacts, etc. and requires a lot of new learning, making of new contacts, new routines, and so on, which adds up to a lot of individual efforts with few ready-made channels smoothing the way. This, then, also requires a decision to keep old friends away, resisting temptation of offers to be in a scheme, of disciplining oneself to new routines, budgeting one's time and money, getting to know new people, maybe concealing one's past, etc. All those things are known to most criminals and thus they know at least the difficulties on this alternative

road. Some seem to make the choice then to continue even if they are attracted in some respects to living a life where they do not support themselves by crime. But this, then, also calls for a decision. In the respect described above, crime as a life-style is living in a marginal world. (This is also discussed in Chapter 6.)

As a final comment to this chapter, it should be added that 'taking responsibility' has, for criminals, a special connotation. It implies an expressiveness; it is - at least partly - used as a means of showing that one is a man who stands up for his action. In this sense it is different from that which refers to taking on long-term commitments concerning a family or a job, which is the meaning we usually attach to responsibility.

5. TIME-PERSPECTIVES AMONGST CRIMINALS

... the idea of time and its division is to a great degree a social convention. These divisions into various periods are reflections of social rhythms of activities; these are their basis. (Sorokin 1943:184)

According to Aubert (1979), the importance of time for social action is seldom made explicit in sociological analysis. Perhaps this neglect is due to the fact that most groups conceive time in the same manner, i.e., in our industrial society, time is clock time (Horton 1977).

Maybe this is why criminologists have so often interpreted an orientation to the present as being a dominant feature of the criminal lifestyle. In this view lies an implicit understanding of criminals as not being oriented to the future in their way of acting. The picture given is therefore one in which individuals live for the moment without thinking of tomorrow - in contrast to those who are well adjusted and have a more responsible attitude towards their future. This seems to spring from the fact that future orientation is equated with long-run goals, as has been the case in most deferred gratification discussions.

This reasoning can be criticized in two ways. Firstly, it contains some rather unclear value-judgements and, secondly, it gives a misleading view of how criminals actually experience their acts in relation to their future consequences.

5.1. The conventional view

Some quotations from classic criminological literature will serve to demonstrate the dominant view of traditional criminals as being hedonistic, irresponsible and having a "live-for-the-moment" attitude towards life.

Cohen is probably one of the best examples of this view: "There is little interest in long-run goals, in planning activities

and budgeting time ..." (1960:30). His description of the behaviour of juvenile delinquents as being characterized by "short-run hedonism" is similar to the picture Matza and Sykes (1961) gave of the same group as concentrating on leisure and being "big-time spenders".

In some of the most famous descriptions of different criminal subcultures we get the same picture of present orientation. Maurer writes that a pickpocket:

... lives very intensively in the present. The past and the future are alike unimportant in his thinking, though he may derive much pleasure from reminiscing over past experiences, and likewise daydream grandly about his prosperity in the future. (1955:24)

The same theme of refusing to plan or even think about the future, unless it is daydreaming about the "big score" runs through Sutherland's (1937) famous book about the professional thief.

According to Maurer and Sutherland this inability to consider the future is due to its being seen as more or less hopeless. Sooner or later criminals will have to serve a prison sentence and in addition they are aware of their limited opportunities in the conventional world. This is roughly the same explanation as Goldberg (1973) gives for the present orientation of the marijuana smokers he studied in Stockholm.

As a group solution says Sutherland, all serious discussion about the future is abandoned - instead one jokes about it and has a "bravado attitude".

5.2. The realism in being a spendthrift

Being a spendthrift is often considered as expressing the fact that individuals live for the moment instead of planning for the future.

For criminals this behaviour could instead be seen as quite

rational. A statement by a former addict can serve as an example of behaviour that might appear as hedonistic and oriented towards the present:

"Sometimes you'll have things going for you so that you can set yourself up with an apartment and furniture. You buy furniture because you need it and during that time you can afford to do it ... what I can't afford is to wait until next week because by that time I might be broke or in prison ..."

"You mean you have to take advantage of your opportunities?"

"You've got to act fast when you've got money, you know."

Many of the interviewees described their attitude towards money by the expression "easy come, easy go". Thus, 51% of those interviewed in my study characterized themselves as "spendthrifts" and 28% as "not caring about money or money doesn't mean a lot". This attitude is naturally also a consequence of the way that criminals make money. As one of them said:

You know, for you money is probably worth a lot, but for me one thousand is like one hundred for you ... I can always go out and buy me a Bacco chisel and steal my money again ...

This attitude obviously differs from that common in the more conventional world. A non-criminal group of young men interviewed in another study of mine (1980) seemed to take a certain amount of pride in their ability to do the opposite, that is, to plan and budget their economy. Another example of this is SIFO's data from a lifestyle study. Only 25% of the young men interviewed there agreed with the assertion "If you have some money left you might as well use it".¹ (See Chapter 7)

In the middle class especially, money is spent on permanent things such as houses, education that leads to a degree, etc. The consequence of this is that once these things are planned for and bought, time is spent mainly on the care and development of these investments rather than on the consideration of other alternatives.

5.3. Availability

"Making it" on the street requires constant orientation to unpredictable opportunities and readiness to make quick decisions concerning the expected value of proposed schemes - all of which subject the individual to great uncertainties. (Goffman 1967: 173)

As quoted above, availability means that criminals need to be present in order to make use of opportunities that they cannot predict - a sort of constant preparedness to take advantage of situations.

... no matter how inconsequential and insulated an individual's moment is and how safe and well managed his place of consequential duties, he must be there in the flesh if the moment is to be his at all ... (Goffman 1967:166) (my underlining)

5.3.1. _ Hanging around

"Hanging around" in cafés, in apartments, in parks, etc., is therefore required if criminals are to support themselves in their world and hence is not just a sign of being oriented to the present. It can also be seen as criminals needing more manipulative zones in their everyday life.²

The same mechanism is involved in the actions of groups such as the dance musicians described by Becker (1966). The dependable musician is the one who is readily available and accepts any offers he gets to play. For people working for record companies or those engaged in writing about music it might be equally important to "hang around" clubs picking up new trends and potential "stars of tomorrow". The same characteristics of making oneself sociably accessible can be seen in such groups as free-lancers in the worlds of theatre, fashion, etc.

Some of the former addicts who had worked as pushers actually complained about how boring it was to hang around parks and

squares waiting for customers to show up. But this, however, was necessary for many of them. One reason could be that they were not established to the point they had people calling them up but instead had to make themselves accessible to the customers. This resembles the waiting and hanging out in strategic places that prostitutes who are not working in massage parlors or the like have to engage in.³

Another example that can be given here is the custom of selling stolen goods to "straights" (people who are not identified as belonging to the criminal subculture). This seems to be fairly common practice according to my studies. 42% reported that they had sold to such people. Many reported in the informal interviews that they had approached people in public parks where they spent a lot of time during the summer.

In an investigation into illegal businesses in Malmö,⁴ examples are given as to how certain clubs can be used by thieves to sell stolen goods - a sort of "marketplace bar" (Cavan 1966). One interviewee in my sample explained how dealing works:

"You know that in some of those clubs there are people who are interested in buying stuff ..."

"Do the guests approach you or ...?"

"No, you walk around and ask ... if there is anyone interested ... And there always is. There are always people interested in buying ... And then, sometimes you get orders and requests to fix something for them, a tape recorder or a camera or something like that ... After that you know who to ask ... after a while you know the people who go there. It's about the same crowd that hangs out there and then after a while they'll approach you, sometimes they'll catch you as soon as they see you're there."

Another example of how it can be useful to be socially accessible by hanging around concerns the acquiring of information about where and when to steal. This is especially important, since most thefts do not seem to be planned - planned in the sense of a long time in advance of the actual stealing. Some of the interviewees, especially those who considered themselves as being more or less professional thieves, blamed this non-professionalism on drug addicts. Drug addicts are becoming an

increasing part of the criminal population, so one might suspect that the need of time for hanging around will increase.⁵

This group seems to lead a faster life, however, because of their need for a daily supply of drugs, which are much more expensive than alcohol (which the older thieves were more apt to use). The consequence of this is that if they cannot support themselves as pushers, they reported that the only way left for them was to steal.

Even many of the thieves with no drug problem did not plan their crimes very far in advance. As reported by McKenna (1972), most crimes committed by property offenders are not planned more than a day in advance.

A statement by an older, former thief can serve as an illustration of how planning can work and how information can be picked up by hanging around:

"Did you usually plan your thefts?"

"No, not really ... it happened when the money was nearly gone ... Then we went out to have a sauna and a good meal during the afternoon instead of sitting around drinking ..."

"Was there someone who came up with an idea for a break-in when you sat around?"

"It was different ... sometimes someone showed up and gave us a tip about where the box safe was at the pay-office or something ... These were people who had had a job for a week or two and when they got their salary, stretched their neck to see where the money was kept."

"But it wasn't anything that you had agreed on beforehand?"

"No, they just dropped in - they knew we were sitting there drinking. And then they said - 'try it', but you never knew whether something would come out of it. It was always like gambling. You seldom knew anything in advance.

In the insecure and unpredictable world criminals live in, some of the hangouts, e.g. bars, parks, pool-halls, etc., seem to function as predictable and stable factors in a criminal's life. One of the petty thieves I talked to even referred to his bar as being his family, since he didn't have any conventional one. In Cavan's (1966) terminology this type of bar would be a "home-territory bar".

Other places not belonging in this category of known hangouts could also be used to meet potential buyers of stolen goods, friends, etc. One of them was the waiting room in the employment exchange office!

One interviewee reported, for example, how he had taken advantage of a situation at a local night-club.

... Once I was out dancing at Baldakinen, where I met this young couple, you see ... They were sitting and talking and of course I listened in ... They were saying that they hoped to be able to buy a color-TV and a stereo ... Well, time passed, and when it was almost twelve I went over to them and patted the guy on the shoulder and said: "I couldn't help hearing you talking. Well, you see I'm just out on leave from prison but I have a colour-TV and a stereo at home that I'm planning to sell ... so if you're interested, you can come along and have a look at it." Sure enough they came along. I wrote them a receipt for the stuff and got the money. So that was a nice little transaction!

Interestingly, the required ability of taking advantage of given opportunities is reflected in the prestige system of the thieves' world. Sutherland notes, for example, how thieves are judged by their "larceny sense", in the same way as "business sense" is applied to businessmen.

It is an ability to deal with unusual situations in the best possible manner ... Every thief with good larceny sense will try to figure out every eventuality in taking off a touch. (1958:32)

5.3.2. _ Mixing_of "free time" and "work time"

Some of the quotes above illustrate how what for most other groups would be considered leisure time has been converted into work time.

The inmates reported that even strolling down a street and glancing in windows could lead to contacts for selling stolen goods or catching sight of a brand new color-TV standing outside a television store could lead to a theft on the spur of the moment.

Instrumental and expressive activities are more intermixed in the criminal world than in others.

As noted by Zerubavel (1979), the social organization of modern society provides individuals with private and public time as well as private and public spheres, which gives people a means of controlling social accessibility. For people with ordinary jobs this mainly provides a means to becoming socially inaccessible, to being able to concentrate at work and to being left in private at home. This is also something that facilitates an orientation to the present.

For criminals, the private and public spheres are much more mixed. To support themselves they have to become socially accessible, e.g. hanging around bars, cafés, restaurants, etc. Simmel (1964) has described sociability as interaction for interaction's own sake, without any other purpose than enjoyment of the moment and without any consequences beyond the encounter itself and hence a de-emphasis of objective purposes and extrinsic rewards.

One can speculate whether this type of undistorted sociability is actually less common among criminals than among other groups, even though it might appear to be the opposite for an outsider.

A comparison with the professional gambler is useful in this context:

Another aspect of the gambler's use of the term action arises from the fact that action and the chance-taking it involves may constitute the source of the gambler's daily livelihood. Thus, when he asks where the action is he is not merely seeking situations of action, but also situations in which he can practice his trade. (Goffman 1969:139) (my underlining)

5.4. Fast action and decisions. The necessity of being one step ahead

The other element in the special kind of future orientation that

I have ascribed to the criminal lifestyle concerns certain situations criminals find themselves in. The very nature of illegal enterprises, i.e. their being illegal and thus liable to punishment, often requires fast action. It is thus necessary for criminals to be one step ahead while stealing, conning, robbing, buying drugs, etc.

Roebuck in his book *Criminal Typology* describes how robbers are proud of having "nerves" and the ability to quickly evaluate a situation. The con men, on the other hand, were proud of their ability to make a fast judgement of people and to quickly devise a strategy to suit the situation and the particular victim involved.

5.4.1. Making use of the situation

The drug addicts in my studies reported that purchasing drugs was mainly dependent upon two things: access to money and connections. Both have to be available at the same time. In addition, the occasion must be properly used if full advantage is to be achieved. The following two quotations illustrate this relation and how it is related to a future time orientation. This interviewee talked about being a pusher.

... if a big load comes in to town it's important to be the first one there and to have a lot of money so you can be there as number one. If I get there a little late, then I'd be number two and that changes the whole situation it gets more expensive . So as soon as you find out ... you have to act ...

A former addict talked about how he used all his available money to buy drugs, and he explained why:

"...Well, you see, it doesn't matter how much money you have. If I have five hundred crowns or a thousand, I'll spend it all as soon as I get through to the man."

"So the guys selling drugs are hard to get hold of?"

"Yeah, when they have got something they're really difficult to get in touch with, so you try to buy all you can. And also, you have to be economic. It's cheaper the more you buy, you have to get hold of all the stuff you can."

In Goffman's terminology this type of behaviour could be described as "insurance behaviour", as a coping mechanism. In general, making effective use of time is much more difficult in the criminal world, one of the reasons being that time synchronization is less common than among other groups.

In the more regulated world people keep to their roles and duties in a more predictable way and expect that agreed times will be kept. Thus, if you know with a fair degree of certainty that someone is reachable at work between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., then fast, vital decisions are not needed just because you have to get hold of a certain person. You know that you can always get them at a certain time and place.

... The consequentiality of properly attending to one's duties on any one occasion is very little noted. Results are, to be sure, more or less pictured in advance, but the probability of their occurrence is so high that little attention seems required in the matter. Nothing need be weighed, decided, or assessed: no alternatives have to be considered. (Goffman 1969:118-119)
(my underlining)

The difficulty of getting in touch with strategic people can be one reason for having to make fast decisions. Another, more obvious one, as noted above, is the very involvement in criminal enterprises. For most people there exists some form of a reserve for the correction of mistakes in everyday life. This, however, is not the case for criminals "at work". To quote Goffman again:

What is special about criminal enterprise ... is the narrowness of this reserve and hence the high price that must be paid for thoughtlessness and bad breaks. (1967:166)

5.4.2. _ Keeping cool

Goffman describes how people with jobs that require fast decisions are often proud of their ability to make them and to "cope". This certainly seems to be a common trait of most criminals (perhaps with the possible exception of the forger who can

perform his crimes alone and undisturbed).

In the course of my studies, it has become clear that most criminals enjoy making the fast decisions that are required in their "work". In general fast action seems to be highly valued, as well as the ability to remain in control even in situations that are unpredictable and dramatic. One of the interviewees declared, for example, that he enjoyed being chased by the police.

Almost 40% of my sample enjoyed the excitement of stealing. According to the taped interviews, the reason for this was the pure excitement and also the control and management of the situation that they felt during the act of stealing. "You get sort of cool, you see ..." Since the interviewees were not asked to relate actual situations when they had been "at work", an illustration of this will instead be borrowed from a robber in Letkemann's book *Crime as Work*.

So we are tense right there [while parking], you know. We are full of tension, and once the action starts, you aren't tense any more: You know, you're so busy watching, looking there, watching there ... You're not afraid any more. But I'm afraid before I go into the bank though. The moment I sit on that back seat or I'm driving that car coming to the bank, I'm looking all over the place and I'm full of tension. I'm ready to bunch up. If somebody were to say "boo!" behind me, you know, I'd go right through that roof. (1973:98)

According to Letkemann, remaining cool is a necessary "work skill", but, as with most work skills, it becomes something that one is proud of. The concentration on the job on hand and the necessity of being one step ahead in any possible action is clearly illustrated in Goddard's description of one of the experiences of a drug dealer waiting for a man he thinks is going to try to attack him:

I'm really wound up now, really focused on the moment. Not nervous, but like I'm on a hair trigger, ready to explode at a touch. And I liked it. I like the feeling. (1980:46)

The elasticity in time that criminals have in their operations is partly due to the special adjustments they have to make when

dealing with conventional society and its time schedules. Letke-
mann has reported how bank robbers prefer to rob banks on Mon-
days, for example, since banks have most money on that particu-
lar day. He also gives an example of how a certain amount of
elasticity is needed in timing the right occasion:

While interviewing an urban bank robber I had little success
in having him respond to the question "What time of the day is
the best time to hit a bank?" He finally responded by saying,
"Well, you can't tell, you see - you may not be able to find
a parking spot". He noted that sometimes robbers are obliged
to cruise around the block repeatedly before a suitable parking
spot materialized. The urban bank robber can neither double-
park nor park some distance from the bank. The problem of park-
ing, which may be only an annoyance to the shopper, is a vital
consideration to the bank robber. (1973:96)

5.5. Time synchronization

Sorokin has written about the importance of agreed upon time.

The possession of means and ways to "time" the behaviour of the
members of any group in such a way that each member apprehends
"the appointed time" in the same way as do other members has
been possibly the most urgent need of social life at any time
and at any place. Without this, social life in itself is im-
possible. (1943:173)

Similarly, Moore (1963) emphasizes the importance that temporal
ordering has for social order to exist at all. The importance
and priorities of different time appointments naturally vary
between different cultures and different groups. Some schedules
and appointments are considered to be more important than others.
The punctual keeping of working-hours is something that is given
a high priority in our society. Zerubavel (1979), for example,
has pointed out that public time is accorded a chronological
priority before the scheduling of private time.

For some criminals, other times are given priorities. In con-
trast to many situations in the criminal world where time is
used flexibly, some times are more rigidly fixed. This is the
case, for example, when addicts are supposed to pay for their

drugs:

There ain't no room for bull-shitting in that world ... It's not like business in the straight world where you can get your payments postponed and then leave the matter to the bailiff and let them take it out of your salary or something, things like that just don't exist. A thousand crowns is a thousand crowns, not nine hundred and ninety-eight crowns, you see ... and it's gotta be handed over at three o'clock, not at six o'clock ... You can't make any compromises.

The addicts reported that it was important to pay for drugs on time as they were scared of reprisals if they broke the agreement. However, even though those reprisals were sometimes carried out, normally they were not. For most of the addicts interviewed the only - but still important - consequence of their not paying on time was that they were not trusted in the future as pushers.

5.6. A special present orientation due to regulated time

Max Weber saw the privileged as present oriented since they are able to maintain and expand their present.

Their kingdom is "of this world". They live for the present and by exploiting their great past. The sense of dignity of the negatively privileged strata naturally refers to a future lying beyond the present, whether it is of this life or of another. (1978:934)

While Weber stressed the importance of the past and present situations of privileged groups as a reason for their orientation to the present, I will instead emphasize the planned and ordered future that those groups usually have.

The constant preparedness for taking advantage of opportunities in the criminal lifestyle leads to a special kind of orientation to the future. The consequence of this is that most criminals are, psychologically, even less oriented to the present or the "here and now" than groups that lead a more regulated life. An example of the inherent unpredictability of the crimi-

nal lifestyle is this statement by a former addict and thief:

... it's like a cycle, you see, where you reach a sort of climax. When you've been in business, you've had a good car and ... then somehow everything blows. You begin by selling your car and change it to a less expensive one and some drugs. And then you have to start from scratch again. That's how it works, year after year ...

Most people, through their more stable occupational and family situations, have a rather good idea of their time-schedule and what is probably going to happen the next day and the next week. Thus people who live a more routine life can afford to be oriented to the present. As Berger and Luckmann write: "As long as the routines of everyday life continue without interruption they are apprehended as unproblematic. (1972:38)

As long as you are living within those routines you can concentrate on the here and now of the situation.

In general, criminals and addicts in particular, reported that they had difficulties in keeping appointments when they were "in the life". This seems to increase the feeling of instability and insecurity and creates a sense of anxiety, which is a further argument against the picture of criminals as being happy-go-lucky and present oriented. The anxiety of suddenly remembering that something should have been done or that some appointment should have been kept does not lead to an enjoyment of and a resting in the present. A quote from a former addict can serve as an example:

"It's hell that you feel so good on drugs, nothing ever gets done ... You freak out ... You meet a girl, well then maybe you've already got something planned but you forget it all and just take off with her for the next nine days to Germany, or whatever."

"You don't care?"

"Sure you do because you mean it when you say it but you get very anxious afterwards ... But you just don't think about it at the time."

According to Sutherland (1937), the only time thieves really reflect on their long-term future occurs when they are imprisoned. This was also confirmed in many of the interviews I carried out in prisons. When asked about what type of work they wanted to have in the future, a common answer was

Well, I have thought about different things such as ... you see, here you really get the time and chance to think about those things.⁶

5.6.1. Side-bets

Outside prison criminals get caught in what Becker (1960) calls "side-bets" that strengthen their criminal commitment. Out of prison, many of those interviewed said they often found themselves stuck in situations they hadn't really intended but that they had to find a solution to. A situation described by a heroin addict who worked as a forger can serve as an illustration:

Last time I escaped from prison I was living in Lund at Socionomen [a student house, where non-students are allowed to live], where a lot of bums live, criminals and so on. I needed bank accounts and stuff like that, ID-cards and ... While they were trying to get those things I got drugs in advance, you see ... But they didn't manage to get the stuff so I had to go out and steal by myself, you see. So I stole a stereo in Malmö, took a cab to Lund which they paid for and then I got drugs since they knew I had the stereo in Malmö, then back to Malmö in a cab getting the stereo, back to Lund again in a cab. It's really complicated ...

Although rather complicated, this serves as an example of how constant lines of commitments can be caused by side-bets - previous promises and actions which have been agreed upon. It also gives an example of how a future orientation is involved in a situation that might appear as oriented to the present.

Perhaps this reason, together with the described need for always being alert and prepared, is why the interviewed thieves so often said that it was the most tiresome job you could have.

5.7. Coping

It is not accidental that the new criminologists⁷ have seen criminals as politically defiant freedom fighters. This picture, even though highly romantic, is supported by the results of my studies in the sense that criminals can indeed be seen as rebels, but in a much more individualistic sense than is usually meant. Many of them reported a great need for independence and being able to do what they wanted; whenever, however, and wherever they wanted to do it.

When asked what they wanted to work with as a legal profession, many answered "to have a business of my own". Moreover, in my study from 1978 96% stated that the most important characteristic of a job was that it should give them great degree of independence.

I agree with Horton writing about young black hustlers in the ghetto:

In a world of complex organizations, the hustler defines himself as an entrepreneur, and indeed, he is the last of the competitive entrepreneurs ... The political conservative should applaud all that individual initiative. (1977:67)

Though Goffman uses the concept of coping in those cases where an individual "makes realistic efforts to minimize the eventfulness - the fatefulness - of his moments ..." (1969:128), I think the concept can be applied to many criminals. The way they cope, however, is naturally different from what Goffman refers to as the Calvinistic solution to life, where the individual divides his day's activities so that each has a small contributive consequence. Hall (1959) and deGrazia (1964) designate this type of time-use as "linear-mechanistic".⁸

Nelkin has used Goffman's (1969) differentiation between coping as one adaption and defence as another. She describes poor seasonal workers who earn their living picking fruit and vegetables and live an uncertain and unplanned life because of the unpredictability of the weather and harvest times. According to her,

the seasonal workers adopt a defensive behaviour, that is, they relinquish all possibilities of control and, instead, seek some form of relief.

Time is often killed by waiting and anticipation. One waits for the end of the workday, payday, the next crop, or the trip home ... Tomorrow is vaguely anticipated to be better than today ... Yet there is no planning or activity directed toward realizing these expectations ... In sum, the migrant's sense of the relation between effort and return, between behaviour and its consequences, is based on the assumption that their environment may be neither predicted nor controlled. In this context, time is present-oriented, irrational and highly personal ... (1970: 37-38)

Kurt Lewin, writing about the unemployed, reflected on the apathy that distinguishes this group, which is so commonly associated with being out of work.

An analysis of this behaviour shows the importance of that psychological factor which commonly is called "hope". Only when the person gives up hope does he stop "actively reaching out". He loses his energy, he ceases planning, and finally, he even stops wishing for a better future ... (1948:103) (my underlining)

Schwartz (1975) has pointed out that unprivileged people have a higher readiness to wait, because even if they have something else they can do, they might not actually have anything better to do.

Criminals, as opposed to the groups described above, however, often use this waiting time to "actively reach out", as Lewin put it.

5.8. The value of independence

I have tried to explain how the planning or future orientation functions as a work requirement for those leading a criminal lifestyle. In addition criminals often set a great value on personal independence and the ability to decide over their own time.

In their book, *The Delinquent Way of Life*, West and Farrington have given a list of criminologists' views of the values and motivation factors of criminals. The value of independence, however, is not mentioned, which is curious since this struck me as one of the most outstanding features in their value patterns. (See also Chapter 9.4.)

As has been noted here, criminals have to adjust to the rest of society's time when they are carrying out some of their enterprises. There are, however, other occasions when they take a certain pride in not caring for the conventions of time use which conventional society defines as proper behaviour. Many of the interviewees stated, for example, how they could not stand waiting in queues when it was not necessary, which often led to them stealing things in stores even if they had not intended to at first, and thereby hopefully passing the queue.

A craving for independence is naturally related to individualism, as noted by Lukes (1973). This is often mirrored in the reasons for not wanting to become an ordinary "John":

... you see, I don't want to be an ordinary John, it just doesn't work out, you have to have some fun ... I think that we too should have some of the good things in life ... I like to travel for example, so whenever it suits me I go to Spain for a couple of weeks. When, wherever and whatever way that fits my plans and mood. You see, I can get that idea on a Friday night and then on Monday I'll be on the plane ...

As a final example of the importance attached to the highly valued independence factor, this former thief had remained a bachelor in order to stay in control of his own time.

"I still have this need for independence. As an example, I've had a lot of chances in my day to get married but I've still got that idea in my head, that if I take my coat and my hat - then she says "where are you going?" She doesn't mean anything with it, but it's natural that you ask a question like that if you're living together "where are you going?" And I don't like that because I want to be able to come and go exactly as I want without having someone asking about it ... And I've always been like that."

"Are many thieves like that?"

"Most of them ... for example, there was this guy who I was

with a lot, that told his wife that he was just going out to buy some buns and some cream to the coffee. It took eight months before he was back! (laughter). On his way to the store he bumped into some friends and had some drinks with those guys and afterwards they went out breaking stealing and got busted the same night."

"Didn't he write or call his wife during that time?"

"No, not once. After those eight months he returned, bought his buns, came home and she said - those were long buns (appreciative laughter). That's the plain truth! He was the same, he wanted to come and go as he liked ... Most of them want to be independent and if they are going to, they have to steal."

This highly individualistic attitude can be seen as making it possible to have an orientation to the immediate future. Criminals are less often tied to a family than the rest of the population, even if many of them say that they wish they had a family. Family bonds, however, often imply planning in terms of long-run goals, since it means adjusting to the plans and schedules of several individuals. Most criminals are free from these constraints, arising from mutual considerations, and thus are able to change plans suddenly and take advantage of different opportunities that arise - a necessity if one is to support oneself by crime.

6. CRIMINALS AS BEING SOCIALLY SKILLED

It is interesting to note that criminals are said to be "undersocialized" or "sociopathic", even though one or more phases of their criminal action can well involve not only a slavish concern for what others would expect them to be if they are to go unnoticed, but also the staking of a great deal on their being correct in their appraisals. (Goffman 1971:277)

Contrary to common beliefs, it will be argued here that criminals possess social skills in many areas. The skills that will be discussed concern those of identifying others, "passing", making contacts, and managing other people. Due to their peculiar work situation, their marginal position, and their lack of formal merits, criminals need and develop the skills referred to above.

Two main problems within the sphere of social interactions concerning personal information confront criminals. One is that of hiding one's own identity - which is discussed as "appearing normal" and "passing". The other is that of identifying others. For criminals, these are vital issues.

Although these social skills are usually associated with con men, other criminals both need and possess them as well. Letke-mann, who has studied robbers and safecrackers, writes:

The criminal must take on the role of the "other" in order to take advantage of the civilian. Although it is apparent that such role-taking is necessary for the successful confidence game, its importance in other types of crime is not recognized in related academic literature. (1973:138)

The American sociologist Waldorf gives, for example, an account of different social skills involved in hustling activities:

Regular hustling seems to foster the development of a specific sensitivity. The hustler learns in a short time how to size up people and situations precisely and quickly - to recognize persons who are vulnerable to theft ... how with a team of two one

can distract a store clerk at one end of the store while the second robs the other end ... But these are only the mechanics of the hustle; more subtle are the abilities to recognize undercover police and to assess the vulnerability of an individual or a situation ... The skilled street prostitute knows exactly whom to encourage or discourage, whom to avoid at all cost. (1973:13)

The author summarizes nicely some different themes that will be discussed later, such as the importance of sizing up people, learning whom to trust, appearing normal under stressful situations and recognizing important others.

I do not want to argue, of course, that all criminals possess these skills. Naturally, they are more or less skilled and educated in these matters. The analysis below should therefore be seen as something close to an ideal typical account of how they act at times and how they think one should act.

6.1. Identifying of others

The concept of identifying has several connotations. The sociologist Stone (1959) points out the difference between identifying with someone and identification of someone. He argues that Mead's "role-taking" means identification with, but before one is able to do this one has to "place" this someone. In doing this we are helped by outward appearances, gestures, language, etc. Below, I will discuss this identifying of others - who is a crook, an undercover policeman, a presumptive customer, etc.

6.1.1. Identifying other criminals

On several occasions the interviewees mentioned that they were able to "see" whether someone was a crook or not. When I asked how they were able to do this, the answers, however, often had a touch of the undefinable - "It's just a feeling," "It's a look in the eyes," "It's not necessarily talking, I think it has more to do with vibrations." As Zerubavel (1982) has pointed out, information about others is often something we see as self-

evident, and since we take it for granted, it is difficult to say what we are looking for.

The ability to recognize each other has been mentioned in several autobiographies. In *My Life in Crime* the thief describes a time when he was in Reno, where his ability to "see" the absence of crooks led him to abstain from crime there:

I also saw that there's no stealing allowed in the town. Everything was in the open, very seldom did they ever have any robbery or burglary. I just see it - I don't run into any characters, anybody on the make or anything in the saloons and places like that. If there's nine or ten men at a bar and there's two or three thieves there, before the evening's over the three thieves'll be together. I didn't meet anybody at all in Reno. (Martin 1952:47)

And Waldorf makes the following remark about the addicts he studied:

Dope fiends claim that they can spot another dope fiend with only the most superficial contact, in many instances without having talked to the other person. Both physical addiction and the attitudes of the dope fiend are said to be apparent in gestures and stance - "in the way he holds himself". (1973:21)

This does not seem to be exclusive for the trained criminal. In a study of juvenile delinquents, Sarnecki notes that those who have run away from home have no difficulty in finding equals in new places by hanging out at the "right places" where "the action is". (1982:243)

This is in line with Goffman's notion that the traditional mechanisms of acquaintanceship and personal invitation are not necessary for action-seekers since the risks of participation serves as invitation and attraction. Action-seekers seem to form a free-masonry where strangers can form a temporary coalition against the society of respectables. The action-seekers, as Goffman describes them, could easily find each other in a new town. One looks for the "right vibrations" or that "crook-look in the eyes", as some said when feeling out whether the stranger one talks to at a café, for example, is the right kind.

6.1.2._ Identifying the police

Criminals also develop a skill for recognizing undercover police. One of the meanings Goffman gives the concept of "cognitive recognition" is

... the placing of an individual in some general social category, but in a context where any member of the category can play a crucial role as, for example, when pickpockets recognize a plainclothes man who is personally unknown to them, thereby, as the argot put it, "making him on the merit". Cognitive recognition, then, is the process through which we socially or personally identify the other. (1966:113)

Here, a "modern thief" who states that he has so much experience with the police that he can spot them by looking at them and "feeling them out":

You know, there are young policemen with beards and long hair drivin' around in old cars with wine bottles in their hands. But, you know, I've dealt so much with the police that I know them, they can't fool me ... you can tell by looking at them and you feel it as well ...

And another states that "you become a sort of character judge" and can therefore spot undercover police.

This knowledge can and often needs to be communicated by rather subtle means. Goffman argues that individuals use "staging clues" to communicate whether the coast is clear or that there are people nearby for whom one should keep up one's guard.

In the criminal world, in fact, the warning that "legit" ears are listening or legit eyes are watching is so important that it has a special name, called "giving office". (1959:183)

6.1.3._ Identifying customers and others

Judging of character is obviously also necessary if one is selling to "civilians", i.e., not to professional fences, that one does not know in advance. An account of how a thief established contact with a man:

I was on my way out of Folkets Hus, and walked into him and I had a tape-recorder on me and a stereo in the car, so I asked him if he didn't want to buy, it was Christmas, you know, some Christmas presents for his kids, I needed some money. Yeah, sure, he looked at them and we got to know each other.

The thief had earlier talked about how younger people were "freer" and therefore easier to approach. This man however was middle-aged and very properly dressed. Therefore, I asked how he dared to approach him.

He had something of a crooked look in his face ... a look in his eyes ...

This recognition of people is necessary for criminals if they are to meet new accomplices, sell to new customers or avoid the police. The importance of other people for one's own safety can even lead to a development of memory skills:

He had only met my friend once ... Suddenly he looked down into his lager and said very quietly: "Your mate is over at the entrance at the right." I looked across and had difficulty in spotting him among the crush of people at the door. Henry smiled when I remarked that he must have an incredible memory for faces. "It's essential in my business - it can stop you getting into lots of bother." (Crookstone 1967:10-11)

In prison, a sense of others' reactions is necessary. The interview below is taken from an American study where this need is vital due to the violence that exists there:

There's a thing you develop in prison that's like a radar antenna - a third eye - for danger. You see danger signs all the time, and if you can apply them to yourself, immediately you become in touch with what's going on around you. And especially in prison, you know who dangerous people are, what dangerous situations are, dangerous bulls, dangerous convicts ... (Bull 1972:73)

6.1.4. _ Identifying in general

Table 25. "I can easily tell what social level a person belongs to after meeting him only once."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	50	26	24	100	(127)
SIFO	29	41	30	100	(125)

For inmates it thus seems less problematic to classify people according to class.

A young thief, who is not even aware that this talent is not self-evident:

"Is it easier for you to classify people?"

"No, anyone can do that. You can tell by the clothing and way of talking and how people carry themselves and so on."

I have found a quite different way of thinking in interviews with non-criminal people. It seems as if the norms in today's society are such that people believe that the social class of an individual cannot be identified just like that. Maybe this is due to Sweden's being such a homogeneous society and having an ideological background of striving for equality between different social groups.

6.1.5. _ Identifying and utilizing the special conditions of any given situation

In some situations, such as being caught in the act, criminals need to "act normal" or to "pass". Goffman has noted that the ability to think quickly and act as if everything is normal, is often seen as a gift but is something some groups - such as criminals - get a lot of practice in doing. Presence of mind is essential in "strategic moments":

Here, then, is a standard for measuring presence of mind, one

involving the ability to come up quickly with the kind of accountings that allow a disturbing event to be assimilated to the normal ... Thieves, of course, have a special need to construct false, good accounts at strategic moments and have a word, "con", to cover ability in this sort of covering. (1972: 263)

In the article *Big City Thieves*, the journalist Bowers tells us the following story, that nicely illustrates what was said above:

Recently a woman coming in her West Side apartment house held the front door open for a young man going out with a TV set that looked familiar and a pillow-case full of clothing. He smiled, thanked her, and caught a cab. He had just burglarized her apartment. (1967:54)
We are also told that he walked out with "a confident air".

Some of the interviewees in my study told me about occasions when they had burglarized an apartment for a TV set or something else, and left the place in a cab like the thief in the quote above. The need to "act normal" during the drive is obvious.

Appearing normal can of course be achieved through different techniques. A few examples: West (1974) points out that thieves play upon the trust in others that pervades in our society and that they use "normal activities", such as "moving furniture", in this respect. How one carries oneself and plays the part that one impersonates is important. A safe-cracker, for example, usually went to big office buildings where during lunch hours, he burglarized the petty cash box, and went into different office rooms, where name signs are placed outside the doors.

And if someone did come in, I would say, "Well, pardon me, could you tell me where Mr. so-and-so is?" (Letkemann 1973:150)

A more explicit illustration of using acting talents is another safe-cracker's solution to a nurse's unexpected entrance into the room where he was in the act of opening the hospital's safe:

She asked me if I was the maintenance man and I said yes, I was. She asked me to come up and fix something. I said I would as soon as I took the box out. I often wondered what she thought

the next morning when they found out that the drug room had been robbed. I'll make a bet that she never told anyone that she had seen me the night before. (Chambliss and King 1972:39)

Even props can be important. Jackson (1972) reports a dope runner who walked around with a horn which he never blew, but used as a front when he hitchhiked late at night. Letkemann (1973), who refers to "the misuse of social convention" by criminals, describes a safe-cracker who used to dress like a businessman and walk around with a briefcase because that gave him the look of respectability which gave him the "key to practically any place".

As was seen by the above, the type of impression that criminals want - or try - to make on other people is often the reverse of that which non-criminal people want to make. As Goffman (1959) has pointed out, legitimate performance sometimes stresses the unique in a situation, while false performance (often needed by a criminal) emphasizes the routineness in a situation, in order to draw attention away from himself and allay suspicion. On the legitimate side, one can take, for example, the circus ring master who has to give every show a shimmer of uniqueness, "And now, ladies and gentlemen, this is the one and only ...", several times every night. Guides and tour-leaders are other examples of professionals who has to emphasize the uniqueness in their performances, in order to convey an enthusiasm for the shown object, the sight-seeing spot, to constantly new audiences.

6.2. Normal appearances for others

In order to know that others are what they claim to be, or in order to fit in during illegal activities as described above, criminals need a knowledge of what is typical for other groups. "Passing"¹ is also used by criminals to fit in, to hide one's identity,² in more ordinary circumstances:

When I get out I dress right and no one can tell that I've been here [in prison], not a soul, and they absolutely won't be able

to find out what kind of business I'm in. (laughter)

However, using one's knowledge about others is perhaps most vital when it comes to committing crime. Goffman uses the terms "predator" and "prey" to describe different roles. His analysis of the "predators'" (here criminals) concern with normal appearances is helpful in the present context.

However, the normal appearances that they are concerned with are not normal appearances for them but normal appearances of them for the enemy. This means that they will have to have some conscious conception of what is natural for the subject so that they might see the scene in accordance with it. They are forced to become phenomenologists, close students of everyday life, not, of course, their own but what the subject takes to be everyday life. (1972:259-260)

Letkemann's report about a prospective bank-robber is illustrative:

Number 41 stated that he once entered a bank to rob it, and noticed a man standing behind the bank counter with a foot on a chair and his arms folded. He knew this man was a policeman, so he left the bank ... he went on to explain that a bank manager may sit on a table with his feet hanging down, or sit on a chair and have his feet on a desk, but "he will never stand with one foot on a chair!" (1973:149)

One advantage (in addition to the obvious one) in stealing from wealthy people according to Martin is the following, also an example of thieves' knowledge of group behavior:

The only place you can do that [walking right in] is your wealthy communities. Your wealthy people don't holler over the back porch and say, Hello, Mrs Smith, will you keep an eye on the house while I'm gone? Your wealthy people don't holler over back fences. (1952:93)

This knowledge of what others consider normal is essential even in periferal things. That parking is a problem in bank-robbery is something not often considered. Knowledge of typical group behavior can be valuable even in solving this, as is seen from the following:

"Suppose you can't find a parking lot?"

"Oh, we double-park. You see, in these small towns, especially country towns, we drive a pick-up truck; if people see a truck double-parked, motor running, they think it's a farmer who's gone into the bank for a minute - so it takes away all suspicion. We make sure it's an old truck, but with a fairly good motor in it." (Letkemann 1973:97)

The thieves I interviewed claimed they could find hidden money easily in people's homes. This puzzled me, but Letkemann's explanation, of "social behavior knowledge", makes it more obvious:

A home does not have a cash register, nor, necessarily, a safe. Therefore, the burglar must make quick interpretations as to the most probable location of the cash. The mental activity here is really a game of wits - of operating on the basis of reciprocal expectations. He proceeds on the assumption he has regarding routine family behavior, he anticipates uniformity in architecture as well as in styles of placing valuables. (Ibid.:55) (my underlining)

6.3. Skills in making contact

Maybe it is the knowledge about others that enables criminals to comparatively easily make contact with strangers.

Table 26. "It's easy for me to make contact with strangers."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	79	8	13	100	(38)
All inmates	65	11	24	100	(133)
Control group	63	10	27	100	(198)

One can thus conclude that inmates do not have greater difficulties than the control group in making contact with strangers. Traditional thieves even seem to view it as easier. I think this is of importance, since problems of sociability are often emphasized in the picture of criminals. I do not want to imply that criminals should be especially skilled in long-term relationships - they probably have problems in that area. But many

have a good ability to strike up a conversation, relate to strangers, etc.

I was impressed by the inmates' openness and their narrative talents as compared to other groups I have interviewed regarding pretty much the same areas: their lives, work, interests, etc. West and Farrington obviously got the same picture; they write about "the typical, extroverted, gregarious recidivist" (1977:15). Maybe these groups develop narrative talents, gregariousness, etc. by having a lot of free time in the streets, in prison, etc.

6.4. Managing people

Another social skill that criminals tend to develop is that of managing people. I will try to illustrate how this can be done as well as the reasons and needs behind it.

It is important to recognize that criminals rely heavily on social skills and that this probably depends on their lack of formal merits to fall back on. As Shibutani has noted:

... any person who must depend upon the cooperation of others becomes responsive to their views. He must be careful to conduct himself in a manner designed not to alienate them. He cannot afford to do anything that would lead others to hesitate, withdraw their support, or oppose his efforts. (1961:90)

Warner et al., in the article *The Hero, the Sambo and the Operator*, discuss underdogs as being "operators" due to their dependence on others.³ Even though the criminals I have studied might not fit into the typical "underdog" description, I still think the authors' analysis is fruitful in this context. They discuss how subordinated groups such as minorities, the poor, and women have been characterized. Previously in the literature, two conceptions dominated. One is the "hero" and the other is the "sambo". The first model, the hero, is the view of the oppressed as rebellious and coupled with this is the idea that oppression produces an ennoblement of character. The sambo, on

the other hand, represents a picture of the oppressed as differential, apathetic, passive, etc. - all as a result of how he was treated. He enjoys, rather than resists, his treatment and identifies with the values of his oppressors. Blacks, who use hair straighteners, and Tory workers in Britain, are used as examples. Sambos are said to internalize a maladaptive set of values which makes it impossible for them to respond intelligently to available opportunities.

The authors argue that for subordinate groups, a third alternative way of reacting is more prevalent, namely the social type "operators". By this, the authors mean a type of behavior consciously calculated and adopted to take advantage of a situation. An example is found in school girls who deliberately hide their academic competence in order to attract the opposite sex (Komarovsky 1947).

This can sometimes be effected by an operator pretending to be a sambo, "... the Sambo is a role, not a 'character', and it is a role peculiarly suited to 'putting on' the social observer." (1973:55)

The Operator model offers an appreciation of the manoeuvres of the oppressed and the dramaturgical skills involved. Some of the skills involved, as the authors see it, are sensitivity in ferreting out between-the-lines meanings, deference, and seeming "incompetence" or stupidity. All these are seen as manipulative strategies. In the present work, I think examples have been given of all these techniques. (See especially Chapter 2.)

Employing deference is a means that can help young delinquents in their encounters with the police (Piliavin and Briar 1964). Kochman (1977) has illustrated how showing respect helped a young man who had been convicted of possession of narcotics. His probation officer saw him as "serious and responsible", and recommended that he be put on probation.

Thieves, however, tend to look down on addicts for using their addiction as a manipulative device. (See Chapter 4) Since thieves

themselves are not morally against manipulating people in some circumstances, the reason for this might be that they, seeing through the acting, get upset because the authorities are taken in. This moral indignation on the part of the thieves is based on a self-righteousness (tinged perhaps with a little chagrin) that a class of people that they look down upon can get away with such things. Furthermore, if the actual drug addiction is made a reason for lenient treatment, the (non-addicted) thieves are at a disadvantage.

Nine lifers wrote an open letter to a newspaper because they were upset about how a well-known big drug dealer had told the police about drug dealing in prison. The indignation they showed is quite typical:

As far as the drug situation is concerned, you're lying a blue streak! You're trying to cash in on the journalistic myth about the prisons swimming in dope. Where does this myth about the surplus of narcotics in prison come from? We'll tell you - it comes from the buddies who get caught committing a crime while on "pass" or just after being released, who tell the court that "they were forced to commit a crime to pay off the drug debt they had incurred in jail." Just like the ones who claim they got hooked while in the pen. Nonsense!! But they tell this to the courts to raise sympathy and understanding, so they'll get a lighter sentence - just like you did! (Expressen Aug. 25, 1982:7)

And here an account of a man who has been a thief as well as an addict. His changing status implied changes in his outlook on using social welfare, and he obviously became skillful in managing social welfare assistants:

"You just didn't go and get social welfare when you could steal, that went against our 'code of ethics' ... But then when you started takin' heroin and morphine and stuff, you weren't so good a thief. It's true that the more dope you take, the worse a thief you become ... Then of course it was good to be on social welfare and you learned how to manipulate them. For years on and off, I went to the social welfare office flying high on shit, but they never noticed a thing - they always thought I was sick when I came. But if I wasn't turned on, I didn't bother going at all - too big a hassle."
"What did you tell them?"

"That I wanted to get into Hindby [a treatment center for addicts] and quit, or get a job. You always found excuses, like if you said you were going to an introduction meeting at Hindby,

the next time you came you said that they didn't answer when you called ... Then the social worker said, 'Yeah, I don't believe it.' But they swallowed it anyhow, because sometimes you didn't succeed in convincing them and got nothing. It's true that they'll believe you if you're a good actor."

An "idealization in performances" (Goffman 1959:35) is sometimes used to achieve goals. West relates how conventional societal beliefs about when an offender should be pitied can be used.

The thief has usually acquired some practical legal sense of how to best present his case (e.g. getting a regular job, or bringing a tearful mother, or pregnant fiancée to court). (1974:203)

And in Bull's study of former criminals this account, from an interview, of how counselors can be manipulated is given:

If making a counselor feel or think - or a therapist - making him feel or think that he's an exception will benefit you, then you do what you have to do to make him feel or think that he is an exception. But he's still the enemy. And you never forget that that ball-point pen is his weapon. So you try to say and do what will impress him favorably with the least fuss and bother. (1972:70)

One can find the same way of learning to manage people in some occupations. Thus, Whyte describes those employed in restaurants in this manner:

They must appear to subordinate themselves and at the same time learn to manipulate people and situations to their own advantage. (1946:143)

To demonstrate deference as a "technique", as seen above, is also used by criminals in some work-related situations. This is the case for example when one tries to get a new customer: one is polite, deferential, etc., in order to make a good impression.

6.5. Reasons for social skills

One reason for criminals to acquire social skills has been

discussed above. In the following section, I will give a few more instances of how they need and learn those skills: through their work situation, their prison experiences, and their marginal situation.

6.5.1. _ Work

The reason as to why traditional thieves to a higher degree than the control group state that they easily make contact with strangers might be the thieves' work situation. For example, they sometimes contact strangers for selling stolen goods. Miller describes a bar whose patrons were partly criminals.⁴ The thieves there had an intermediate position and had to mix with several groups of people:

Unlike the businessman and hip squares, however, thieves are not segregated from the other participants all of the time. To the contrary, the significance of the thieves in the setting derives from their activities as intermediaries between the various patron groups and between deviant and non-deviant activities. They offer their services to other criminals when those services are requested, and also they are prepared to offer goods and services to non-deviant patrons who may approach them. (1978:210)

That they develop skills in handling people is related to their own self-control and self-consciousness. If one views thieves as businessmen, as I have done (and they do themselves), it is not surprising (especially if coupled with their marginal and stigmatized position) that:

... where there is the possibility of alternative responses, as in the case of a client who might accept, decline, delay, become insulted, or laugh upon being asked to conclude a transaction, there is much concern over the kind of impression that is being made. (Shibutani 1961:90)

Apart from making contacts in their work, skills in identifying others are also vital in their work. This has been discussed previously, but a final quote illustrates the need to make adequate assessments of other criminals in a world lacking formal merits:

On the streets I know hundreds and hundreds of characters, but I don't know their names. Say you're a character and I'm a character and I see you with a character that I know. I have no way of checking your credit rating or anything else, so I judge you by who you associate with. If I know that this person is a good person and not a polecat, not a stool pigeon, not the man's man, then I have to give you the credit for being all right. (Jackson 1969:147)

The quote above leads us to the issue of trust, that is important not only in the context of work.

6.5.1.1. *Trust*

Trust is essential both in determining whom of the others to trust, and in establishing a reputation of being trustworthy oneself. Social skills are evident in the first aspect of judging others. But they are also important in the second aspect. Art Pepper (1979) relates, for example, an incident where the police out of revenge tried to make him look like someone who had "ratted" (told the police about other criminals) just because he would not. Social skills of a high order were necessary for him to regain the respect of other inmates. It was certainly not enough just to state his innocence.

Different situations require varying degrees of "character reading" when deciding whether or not to trust someone. Goode notes situations where people do not know each other and are not supposed to question each other, as was supposedly common for the American frontier towns. These norms closely resemble those of the criminal world:

Of course, in such a situation almost everyone develops competence in "reading" the symbols, gestures, modes of speech, and so forth, in short, the cues by which people ascertain to which extent the claims are justified. (1978:255)

He expands this reasoning by saying that even if people in such circumstances feel more free to make exaggerated claims about themselves, others are less constrained to believe them. Goode's analysis of these aspects of the frontier town is comparable to

the criminal life. The inmates I interviewed expressed great moral indignation towards those who thought they were "something special", or made, as they saw it, unjustified claims. This is, of course, quite natural, as believing these claims could lead them into undesirable situations: trusting someone who claims he is good at break-ins, but who fouls up while making one. The consequences could be quite disastrous. Therefore, an emphasis is made on ferreting out phony talk or behavior. Irwin says:

To be all right, you mustn't be a phony. A phony is a person who puts up bogus fronts. Criminals are not against fronts. They are well aware of and skilled at front management. They admire persons who maintain good fronts, but they object to phony fronts. Putting up a phony front is making claims about yourself which aren't true for purposes other than humor or stealing, promising something at the moment for the sake of impression and not coming through later, or pretending to believe one thing and then by actions or words revealing that you actually believe something else. (1972:124)

Since contacts and trustworthy relationships are so important for criminals, it is not surprising that they more than others react strongly to a "bogus front" which to someone else might even be slightly amusing.

The respondents in my study, when we talked about possible social skills among criminals, emphasized that they were more able to determine whom to trust and mistrust than most people. This is also reflected in the answers to the statement below from the questionnaire.

Table 27. "One cannot be too careful in one's dealings with other people."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
All inmates	58	9	32	100	(127)
SIFO	28	32	40	100	(125)

Determining reliability in one's associates may be even more important today, since criminals work with different associates from time to time:

The most striking thing about present day relationships between professional criminals is that these relationships are not structured by strong ongoing group relationships, but are structured primarily by the crimes that professional criminals commit. Since different crimes, or the same kind of crime committed under different circumstances, require different kinds and number of personnel, the groupings of professional criminals tend to change from crime to crime. (Gould et al. 1968:32-33)⁵

What this interviewee says about finding and pairing up with associates is illustrative, and it is highly contrary to the situation where everybody knew each other in the criminal world:

... you always bump into another crook somehow ... There's always something that clicks between ya'. It doesn't have to be much, just a little. Everything doesn't have to be compatible because this isn't forever. It's not like having a family or something, 'cause then it has to fit one hundred percent. It's not like that when you commit a crime, it's just temporary - you need someone for a short while.

6.5.2. Marginalism

Criminals as marginal men have already been discussed in Chapter 4. Since it is important in the present context as well, I will give some further evidence below to support the argument.

A high percentage, 65%, of all inmates seem to believe that it is easy for them to associate with different types of people.

Table 28. "Do you think that criminals, due to their way of living, have an easier time socializing with different kinds of people than ordinary people have?"

	%	N
Yes	65	(68)
No	35	(36)
Sum	100	(104)

Table 28a. "If Yes, why?"

	%	N
Because you have to learn whom to trust and whom to distrust.	49	(36)
Because you have to use every opportunity, both in terms of stealing and selling goods and thus must be able to seize people up.	27	(20)
Because you meet so many more people as a criminal than do ordinary people.	62	(46)
Because you have to be able to handle officials and others in order not to get caught.	27	(20)

Note: 30% of those who answered the preceeding question did not answer this question.

The most common reason why criminals consider it easy to socialize with different types of people is that they associate with so many different groups. This is confirmed in the table below. It is obvious that it is easier to develop skills in adjusting to different groups if one has encountered the different cultures they represent.

Table 29. "What type of people do you usually associate with on the outside?" (%)

	Types of associates ⁶						N
	Thieves	Addicts	Hasch smokers	Family	Ordinary people	Others	
Traditional thieves	30	5	23	20	45	20	(40)
Modern thieves	34	22	44	28	30	10	(50)
Mixed	33	33	48	14	19	29	(15)
Addicts	0	37	53	26	5	16	(19)
All inmates	28	21	39	23	29	16	(130)

Note: They could choose more than one alternative.

The socializing with ordinary people as well as with criminals seems to be a matter of preference for many. This is evident from the tables below:

Table 30. "I feel more at home among addicts than among ordinary people."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	8	87	5	100	(37)
Modern thieves	29	43	29	100	(42)
Mixed	58	32	11	100	(19)
Addicts	33	44	22	100	(18)

Table 31. "I feel more at home among thieves than among ordinary people."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	20	57	23	100	(35)
Modern thieves	31	41	29	100	(42)
Mixed	45	44	11	100	(18)
Addicts	17	61	22	100	(18)

Table 32. "I feel more at home among ordinary people than among thieves or addicts."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	39	36	25	100	(36)
Modern thieves	22	44	34	100	(32)
Mixed	26	49	26	100	(19)
Addicts	22	50	28	100	(18)

Interestingly, those who prefer the company of other criminals most are the mixed. One reason for this may be that this group, who seem to get the least out of their criminality, need their

criminal peers as support more than others. The other groups are to a higher degree "in it" because of an immediate reward: money for thieves, drugs for addicts.⁷

Gale Miller's (1978) reflection on cohesiveness in deviant groups might be helpful in explaining why those interviewed did not prefer their own groups. He argues that deviant groups consist of informal segments rather than wider occupational groups. Although the members of each segment might be committed to each other, the rivalry between them, the lack of general loyalty due to the primary interest of making money (or attaining drugs), and thirdly the concern of the immediate social niches and not of the general common position in society, limits the general group consciousness and commitment.

Not only is belonging and identity complicated at a general level; there are also differences between groups other than that of the mixed referred to above. The results reflect, I think, my impression of the traditional thieves as being more like ordinary people than addicts in their value pattern, and as having a rational approach to their crimes as a means of support. To a question about who among other criminals is most respected and appreciated outside prison, the most common answer in the traditional thief group was "the ones who live like the squares, but support themselves illegally". Of the traditional thieves, 45% agreed to this, as opposed to only 14% of the addicts. More among the traditional thieves also stated that they had lived as square-johns themselves:

Table 33. "Have you lived a square type of life?"

%	Yes	No	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	70	30	100	(37)
Modern thieves	65	35	100	(46)
Mixed	53	47	100	(19)
Addicts	50	50	100	(18)
All inmates	63	38	100	(120)

Especially the older thieves stated that they preferred seeing non-criminals when they were out of prison. "It's like you need to get away from work, you know, and that type of jargon ...", "If you don't change to other types of people, you'll get really dumb. You need to speak about other things than we do here ...", "I don't like people with problems, it's damn tiring. So I see relatives or other friends when I'm on the outside."

Even the respondents who did not prefer the company of others than criminals had tried at times to go straight. Usually this implied working with non-criminals and maybe also having a relationship with a non-criminal woman, meeting her family and friends, etc.

In *The Time Game* there is a description about how a former convict and addict miraculously successfully makes it in the conventional world, and then only a few years before graduation from university, leaves his work, gets a divorce, drops out of university and returns to drugs. Empey comments in the post-script that the convict is a marginal man and that this explains some of his problems. Dunn, the convict, says himself:

When I was a kid I had a difficult time switching from being a "hard guy" in the street gang to a cool professional. It was the second most difficult change I have ever tried to make. The most difficult change was this last one. It was even harder to play the middle-class role. I have never experienced a complete sense of belonging anywhere. (Manocchio and Dunn 1970:259)

These experiences are, I think, - even if less dramatic - quite general for most criminals. As several authors have pointed out, being marginal often includes an increased self-awareness and demands on the self, as well as a distanced look at oneself and the world. Dunn talks, for example, about "playing the middle-class role". Middle-class people probably see themselves as "middle-class", but hardly "playing" the middle-class role. He also mentioned switching from the "hard guy" to "the cool professional" - which is looking both at oneself and at others and their roles in a distanced way.

6.5.3. Prison experiences

Prison is usually viewed as destroying social abilities.⁸ This is of course true for many. But at the same time it can be seen as a social training ground for getting along with others: different inmates with different personalities, staff of various kinds, etc.

An old safe-cracker spoke about difficulties in changing his style of talking when he got out, but also of the skills in adjustment that he learned in prison:

"When you walk out of this house, you have to turn your talking around."

"Isn't that difficult?"

"Yeah, sure, it's damn difficult, but I think those in here have a real good adjustment ability ... ability to adjust to different situations. You've gotta have it if you're gonna make it, otherwise you'll break down. Most in here can deal with all kinds of environments, you'll learn that in here, 'cause otherwise you won't make it."

6.6. Proudness and enjoyment from social skills

As with any other skill, social skills are something one can be proud of and also something one can enjoy. Cheating others about one's own identity or intents can, for example, be appreciated.

A thief thinks square-johns are crazy ... When I was stealing, why I lived a lie. You automatically - what's the word - accclimate yourself to it and you just go ahead and live it. I mean, you enjoy it and get some guy in the bar and you're sittin' there and you lay an awful story on the guy and he's sittin' there shaking his head like a nut on the end of a string you know, and he's buying the story. You get up and go home and you say, "Why, I had an enjoyable evening." (Chambliss and King 1972:76-77)

In Jackson's *In the Life*, the interviewee who states that he has done every criminal activity except false checks, murder and rape, says he prefers using stolen credit cards:

With the cards you got to play the part, and as far as playing the part goes I'm a pretty fair actor. You pull up and put some story on a young kid and he's going to go for it real quick. (1972:129)

The social skills can, of course, be used after one has left the criminal life, and especially when working with criminals. A former addict, who presently works in a treatment home for addicts, states that he has good use of his social skills in detecting manipulative attempts from those he tries to rehabilitate:

You notice from the guys how skillful you yourself were once when they try to pull the same stuff on you - I really have to try hard not to laugh, 'cause I know exactly when they're tryin' something, and then they say, "Damn, how dumb I was to try - you've been around so long ..." But if they go into the social welfare office and there's a sweet young thing from the school of social work sitting there, it's all over in two seconds flat. Even with a guy - it's as easy as anything.

7. THE PHILOSOPHY OF MONEY

Money, or rather the attainment of money, is often given as the reason why one gets involved in illegal activities. This seems to be quite general for those engaged in property crimes. As Sutherland remarks:

When thieves finish the day's work, they generally congregate in hangouts. There they are thieves together regardless of their rackets, with one common love - money - and one common enemy - the law. (1937:158)

Shover (1971) gives a similar description of "good burglars" as interested in money as a "motor" in their particular life-style. He also points out that in order to even be considered a thief, a man must be "kinky", i.e., have an eye for opportunities to make money.

Even juvenile delinquents, who are often assumed to be less rational in their crimes, report, according to West and Farrington (1977), material gain as an explanation for their illegal acts. The authors collected various explanations, given in the criminological literature, to delinquent motivation, such as "search for thrills", "rational reasons", "group solidarity", and "self-exculpation". Then they asked their interviewed delinquents to explain why they had committed different types of offenses and classified the answers according to the categories given above. Sixty percent of all illegal acts were committed for reasons of material gain. Naturally, the given reasons varied with the type of crime. "Buying cheap" (buying stolen goods) and "stealing from cars" were done primarily for material gain (88% and 79% respectively), while motives of enjoyment predominated in offenses of damaging property and "joy-riding".

7.1. Different meanings attached to money

The significance of money, however, seems to be different for criminals as compared to most people in the conventional world.

My respondents emphasized that they did not want money to assume a principal place in their lives, while at the same time they were not prepared to live a life of penury.

One can contrast the interviewed criminals with a study of consumers by Sallerberg (1978), where a high value was placed on being a "smarty". This meant being able to buy at special rates, finding cheap things in a number of ways. One liked the challenge of getting as much for one's money as possible.

To be a smarty obviously means different things for different groups. For criminals, however, this seemed to imply handling one's businesses in a clever way. Many thieves would find it petty to bargain over clothes. An elderly thief is proud of having restored his apartment and some old furniture himself, but denies being economical:

No, I'm not. If I want something I'll buy it whatever it costs. I don't ask the price ... I don't think I've ever asked first "How much is this?"

Talking about the squares, one thief told me he felt sorry for them, and suggested jokingly that we should have a society where he and the factory worker (which the squares often are pictured as) would exchange jobs every other week. But he did not think it would work because the squares are so afraid of changes, even in their financial situation (see quote on page 170)

This is probably true to a certain extent. For most "ordinary people" this would be too drastic a change, creating an anomie situation in their lives.¹ In a study with ordinary people, someone told me that he bought tickets from a state lottery every month and since the study included questions of finances and consumption, I asked him what he would spend his money on if he won. He began talking about this, and then after a while he said, "Actually, I have thought about it at night sometimes, and it would be a nightmare - everything would change. I don't know if we could take it as a family." But he continued to play for the fun of it, probably calculating that the chance of win-

ning the jackpot was slim. In short, winning a lot of money would result in an anomie situation, since the financial challenge in his and his family's life was built on the planning and saving up for future projects instead of attaining them immediately.

Regularity and restrictions seem to imply security. Whyte's sarcastic description on budgetism as the opium for the middle classes:

The suburbanites have an almost obsessive desire for regularity in money transactions ... Salary checks, withholding deductions, mortgage payments - the major items in middle-class finances - are firmly geared to a thirty-day cycle, and so, increasingly, are all the other items. It is, suburbanites cheerfully explain, a matter of psychology. They don't trust themselves ... In self-entrapment is security. The suburbanites try to budget so tightly that there will be no unappropriated funds, for they know these would burn a hole in their pockets. Not merely out of greed for goods, then, do they commit themselves. It is protection they want, too; and though it would be extreme to say that they go into debt to be secure, carefully chartered debt does give them peace of mind - and in suburbia this is more coveted than luxury itself. (Whyte 1956:137, 164)

Criminals, on the other hand, hold negative opinions about regularities and restrictions of money which for most of us seem to have a positive value. Furthermore, criminals can afford these values. They can live according to the principle of adjusting income to expenses rather than the reverse, since the cost of acquiring money for them is quite low. (See Chapter 5)

Differences are also seen in what is meant by "large sums", "moderate sums", "enough to get by on", etc. A thief who has just told about a time where he had spent 18,000 crowns in a couple of weeks is indignant about the greediness of drug dealers.

"Drug dealers, they're only motivated by money, they're just obsessed with money. They can earn a million a year, which would be enough, but they won't stop at that."
"You weren't crazy about money?"

"No, not as long as I had enough to get by."

"But 18,000?"

"Well, you can't help stumbling over it. After that score I didn't do anything for two weeks. Money goes quickly, you know. We bought some new furniture and took a cab here, a cab there, and party after party. You know, we drank five or six bottles in a day, you were generous, and cigarettes, soft drinks and food ..."

The scholars in the "new school of criminology" have viewed criminals as opposing the unjust capitalistic system.² A question was given to measure both the interest in money and the sense of justice as seen in some earning more than others.

Table 34. "It is quite all right that someone earns a few hundred thousand or more a year."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Traditional thieves	47	44	9	100	(34)
Modern thieves	35	40	25	100	(40)
Mixed	26	47	26	100	(19)
Addicts	18	76	6	100	(17)
SIFO	34	51	16	100	(125)

"A few hundred thousand" is quite a high income in Sweden which only a few earn. The answer reflects the more entrepreneur-like attitude among traditional thieves. Except for the addicts,³ the other groups do not differ much from the SIFO sample.

Some of the inmates stated in the informal interviews that the reason for their being criminals were that they did not accept a situation where they had to restrict themselves due to lack of money. This is an answer that could be interpreted as "rebeling against the system", but in a very individualistic way. According to the answers to the question above, criminals do not, as a group, form the avant-garde in a revolution for equality.

7.2. Being a spendthrift

First of all, it can be concluded that inmates describe themselves as spendthrifts or not really caring about money. In a study from 1978, I got the following results:

Table 35. "How would you describe your attitude towards money?"

	%
Thrifty, almost tight	2
Economical	13
Wasteful	51
Don't care about money, money doesn't mean that much	28
No answer	12
N	(101)

Note: More than one alternative was given by some of the respondents. Thus, the sum is greater than 100.

A question, taken from SIFO, confirms that inmates have more of an "easy come, easy go" attitude towards money.

Table 36. "If you have some money left, you might as well spend it."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
All inmates	40	43	17	100	(127)
SIFO	25	62	14	100	(125)

I think that the differences are greater than the result shows. In the taped interviews, the thieves told stories about spending-sprees and at times even bragged about these occasions. I have not encountered the same attitude in similar interviews with non-criminals.

The following statement gave more disparity, however:

Table 37. "You might as well live on a day-to-day basis - that's how I reason when it comes to money."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Thieves	45	38	17	100	(76)
Addicts	11	56	33	100	(18)
All inmates	37	40	22	100	(114)
SIFO	11	77	11	100	(125)

This short-sighted economic planning does not however mean that one is not interested in money. As Simmel has pointed to in the article *The Miser and the Spendthrift*, there is a similarity between the two. The spendthrift is really as interested in money as the miser. But the spendthrift's interest is just hidden under a sort of man-of-the-world attitude. His fascination of money is expressed in his spending - this is the important feature - not as much in an interest in the objects which are bought.

... the indifference about the value of money which constitutes the essence and the charm of prodigality is possible only because money is actually treasured and assumed to be special. (1971:183)

If one were indifferent towards money, then throwing it away would be done with indifference, not grandeur.

That money really does mean a lot, at the same time as it is decisively denied, is nicely illustrated by a story in a biography about a thief. He recalls a time when he and everybody else in a swank roadhouse got their bills paid by a big spender. He estimates the cost to about twenty thousand dollars, and comments:

That was a story in itself, that was an incident that I'll never forget. You know, after all, I was just a punk. I'd seen a great deal, I was older than my age, but I'll never forget that gesture of a bigshot. Not a petty bigshot, not anybody that wanted to just make an impression or anything, but a man that done things in a big way. (Martin 1952:71)

7.2.1._ Spending_as_a_way_of_communicating_success

According to Letkemann, criminals often display successful scores by spending freely, offering drinks, etc. to colleagues at bars known to be criminal hang-outs. They do it in spite of the risk of this raising suspicion among the police or informers, because:

Since by definition his work is secret, it is he who must communicate his successes and competence to others. (1973:45)

Adler and Adler notes in *The Irony of Secrecy in the Drug World*, that although secrecy is of high importance, drug dealers often neglect it, due to some inherent qualities in their lifestyle. One of these factors is that high prestige is given dealers who handle large amounts of drugs. Similar to Letkemann, the authors conclude about the dealer that:

Unless someone shares the knowledge of his activities with others, there is no way he can get the respect, fear, or admiration which he has earned ... (1980:259)

In order to hold on to their reputation, they reveal their "secrets" through bragging or showing off in the fast life of the dealing crowd.

Money is furthermore one of the few measures of status in the criminal world. People in the conventional world have more areas through which they can attain respect or status: work, family, a house, a new car, etc.

The same argument can probably explain the conspicuous consumption that some criminals engaged in. The way Suttles explains why the blacks, in the slum that he studied, followed the ever-changing fashions, is informative. He believes that they, in contrast to more established people, need this expressive style to get some kind of recognition and individualism.

Where persons are firmly entrenched in public statuses that are respected, trustworthy or powerful, they can afford the art of

understatement, subtlety and modesty. With so many virtues it is easy to wait for someone else to point them out. Addams area Negroes are not so well placed. (1968:129)

Jackson points out still another aspect that makes thieves dependent on external means for status, namely the irregularity of their lifestyle. Contrary to prostitutes and addicts whose lifestyle imply more of long-term relationships with others such as customers, dope sellers, and the police, thieves are seen as more isolated.

This relative isolation contributes to his dependence on externals for status, his tendency to spend money quickly and obviously, his attempt to make an expensive rather than "good" appearance. (1969:25)

Furthermore, the impossibility inherent in the criminal life to show off with say, a luxurious car, a house, etc. (due to the inability to give a lawful account to questions from the police or taxation office) leads to squandering money in the present in order to achieve status and prestige.

7.2.2. _ Ideological reasons

This spending now, instead of saving for the future, seems to have an almost ideological meaning.

Whatever money or drugs become available are consumed in a conscious rejection of the normative middle-class value of saving. They live for the moment and let tomorrow worry about paying the tab. (Adler and Adler 1980:461)

This ideological view towards consumption was expressed by the respondents in my study, in statements such as "I want to be able to do what I want, when I want, and how I want." It is an attitude towards life that implies a denial of society's right to interfere with my wishes and an emphasis on the experiences here and now. Many said things like "You only live once," meaning you will have to make use of the opportunities you have when they arise.

"You don't have any use for money that is bound up ... Money should be used, it's not to be kept somewhere ..."
"Should it be used for living?"
"Yeah, all the time. You don't know what day you're gonna die ... some people save and then they die, what's the use of that?"
"What do you want to do with your money?"
"Place it in the spenders' bank!! Parties and having a good time, go somewhere ..."

Talking about the squares:

"They'll go to Crete [a common destination for charter trips] and plan and ... changing cars, buying a Volvo and shit like that. They put an enormous amount of money into cars. You wouldn't think so, but they do. A lot of trash that they can't enjoy."
"You think one should use money to have fun with or experience things with instead of just owning them?"
"Yeah, right, but maybe they need another car, having a family and so on."
"You don't?"
"Well, not like that. I can have it for two months, then sell it and take a cab if I need to, instead. They can't. They are committed to keep on paying for it, monthly or whatever. I wonder how much fun it is, to me it sounds like too much routine ..."

Even if he recognizes the need for a car, he is obviously sceptical about the gratification of a lifestyle that "forces" one to acquire, say, a Volvo.

7.3. Generosity

The interviewees often spoke about how they, on the spur of the moment, were able to give things away, be generous with friends, relatives, etc. This was talked about with a certain self-righteousness, distinguishing them from the squares, who had to save "every penny". It was a way of saying how money did not mean much, as well as expressing the ability to do things spontaneously. Analyzing this economically, one can see it as a result of the inability to save and invest inherent in their lifestyle: "You can't buy a house, unless you can explain where you got the money from."

Goldberg has written about a drug community in Stockholm, and

describes the informal leader Richard as being very generous. The author comments:

He is not lending money, he is redistributing resources ... The giving and receiving of presents unifies the tribe under the leadership of the chief. (1973:84)

Thus, generosity is seen as functional for the unity of the group. It is also instrumental for Richard, who makes a lot of money at the expense of the group.

For the individual, being generous can also give a sense of having the upperhand and being in control. It is thus a sort of psychological-economical investment. In a study of hustlers, the author has bought one of the interviewees a drink at a bar. He is, however, not allowed to continue in the position of the one who is paying:

Immediately after I paid for the drink, he bought me another drink. I knew he wouldn't allow me to buy another drink, that he would never feel satisfied until he succeeded in getting me "charged". It was all a matter of status for Strobe. It was his way of showing he had the money to back up his appearance. More generally his motto was: "Nobody should have anything over me." (Pryce 1979:42)

Many of the inmates interviewed in my study said similar things, for instance, "I don't allow anyone to control me," or summarizing their lives as "At least I don't owe anything to anyone." The last type of statement refers to a feeling of not being in debt financially to any individual, or having someone who had the right to make other types of demands.

Being generous can also be seen as a sort of compensation - at least at some moments it is possible to be free with one's money, to get an upperhand in a situation. A man whom I would label as belonging to the "mixed" category, made this comment about living on social welfare:

You feel bad living on welfare, that's not what you want to do. You don't want to take that money and see it disappear in a few days. But it's impossible to make it last, budgeting for a long

time, a week. So you waste it fast in a day or two and give away to those around you, undisciplined ...

7.4. Conspicuous consumption?

A few respondents described how they dressed conspicuously when they were out of prison, almost in the black pimp tradition, as this thief who described his attire:

I used to dress in black and white and red ... I could wear white suits in the middle of the winter, a black shirt and a red scarf and a golden ring around the scarf. In any case, I would dress as expensively as possible.

This is very much in line with the description of juvenile delinquents given by Matza and Sykes (1961). The authors compare these youngsters with Veblen's leisure elite and their taste for luxury and conspicuous consumption.

Most of the interviewees did not, however, belong to this group of consumers. In common to the non-addicted criminals was that they had a special style of consumption. Some said, for example, that they just wanted enough to get by. When asked about what "enough" was, they said things like "no luxuries". But when talking about consumption, they emphasized that they did not want to be restricted in things they wanted to buy or do. This seemed to be general but the things one wanted to do or buy shifted a lot. An example may illustrate what they meant:

"When do you hit life's jackpot? When are you happiest?"
"When you have enough to get by, when you enjoy yourself, and things work out ... as long as you can make ends meet. It's ridiculous to have high demands."

And he gives this as an example of what he wants to be able to do:

I was going home to my mother in Lund so I took a cab from Malmö. Well, she wasn't home so I invited the cab driver to a coffee shop for a cup of tea and suggested that we could wait there for a while till she came home. Sure, he said, and we went in

and had something to eat and drink, had a beer and when we went back, she had returned. Things like that are nice to do ...

This is, of course, something that would be seen as highly irresponsible, economically, by people on a regulated budget (cab fares are very expensive in Sweden). But for the respondent this was an example of the minor things in life that cheer you up.⁴

For him, conspicuous consumption was not as important as being able to do things when he decided he wanted to do them. He also emphasized the importance of being an individual. He exemplified this by saying that he could not understand why people dressed just like everybody else. Since others also talked about clothes as so important, I decided to test one of SIFO's statements on the inmates:

Table 38. "I avoid dressing like everybody else."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	42	25	33	100	(127)
SIFO	24	42	34 /	100	(125)

The traditional thieves agreed most to this question - they were much less concerned with conspicuous consumption than with maintaining and cultivating their individualism. Taylor (1982) even mentions an air of cultivated "ordinariness". Individualism was important to my respondents concerning their clothing but also in other areas. Several of them had very definite opinions about what kind of liquor they liked, favorite types of food, ideas about interior decorating, special types of furniture, etc.

7.5. Negative factors

That status is strongly connected with money might also be experienced as troublesome. Many of my respondents stated, for example, that "Money is the only thing that counts here, you

know." The quote below is from a thief who described himself as having succeeded, earning respect by living on a high standard. He was now, however, tired of the all-importance of money in this world and saw this as a reason for quitting crime. Anyhow, this is his account of socializing in his former world:

... there were certain restaurants where you met ... it was not only the guests, but the staff and the owner and all, so everything was just "go ahead" ... But then you're supposed to entertain the people and show ... yourself in the right kind of clothes and have the right kind of chick, otherwise you weren't admitted anymore. So that's what counted ...

The third most frequent answer to a question about disadvantages in living as a criminal, given by 39% of the inmates, was that everything centered around getting money all the time. This is not - at least not entirely - a problem with the supply of money, since only 13% agreed to the alternative "bad finances". (See Table 51.)

Finally, the quote below is very illustrative of money as an important factor in criminal life when it can be experienced as too confining. A young hash dealer was a bit ambivalent both towards money and his criminal life:

It gets to the point where you spend money just to have a motivation to continue, because without that motivation you might as well quit.

8. LOOKING AT THE SQUARES

8.1. Comparisons with the square-johns

A way to get an identity is by comparing oneself with others. Thieves compare themselves with two main groups: addicts and the squares. Here, I will deal with their view of the latter.

Contrasts serve both to provide a meaning in life and to clarify alternatives.

... each of us finds meaning in his life not only by identifying things for what they are, but also by noting what they are not. Moreover, in noting what they are not we clarify the alternatives that are open to us, thus establishing the psychological basis of what is most important of all - human freedom.¹

While interviewing, comparisons between the criminal life and that of the squares were a constantly reoccurring theme. And most of the time the criminal life was favored. This does not mean that they saw the criminal life as the perfect life, but as Irwin (1980) has pointed out, a criminal life can be seen as more rewarding in the absence of other alternatives. It is interesting that the perceived alternative is the negatively-stereotyped lifestyle of the square-johns: their activities are dull, leisure means TV viewing, their outlook on life is narrow, they have seen so little of life, etc.

Shover points out that those who are seen as "good burglars" derive a psychological reward from the comparison with the squares.

Many good burglars derive feelings of satisfaction from a weighing of how their life compares with the lives they believe are experienced by many square johns. When they take into account their incomplete education and lack of job skills, the only alternative legitimate role which they can imagine as being open to them is one which they evaluate with extreme negativism. They know it as the working stiff, a name which, by itself, tells worlds. (1971:122)

This negative outlook is well-known in the criminological literature. Here, however, I wish to examine this attitude a bit more extensively than is usually done.

In a question from a study in 1978, the inmates were asked if they thought that the life of the squares had any good sides to it. Of 88 respondents 38% categorically stated "no", while the rest mentioned some aspects as attractive, such as having a family, a job, or a more secure life.

This, I think, is in agreement with the result of another question about who gets the most appreciation and most respect in the criminal world.² A fourth of the interviewed felt that the one who could earn his money illegally but at the same time live like the average man had the most respect. That is, he had really been able to beat the system, arrange a front and avoid having too many of the insecurities of the criminal life. For example, a young addict and thief wanted to straighten up in the following way:

"I used to say this life is worth it even if I'm only out three months a year. I live those months much more than the working stiff people. But I've changed and now I don't think it's true."
"Are you going to live like the working stiff now?"
"No, I don't think I can take a nine-to-five job. My body hasn't got that in its computer ... No, I have to straighten out and put things into some kind of order. I've been inside here too long. You can start up drug dealing (he had previously told me, 'I could have been a millionaire now, without boasting, on drugs.') for a while and you can't organize that if you're an addict yourself, it's just not possible ... And if that doesn't work out, you can start studying and get a job."

Back to the comparisons. In a biography of a thief, the function of giving alternatives in contrasting oneself to other groups and their way of life, is clearly shown:

The alternative - the prospect of vegetating the rest of my life in a steady job, catching the 8.13 to work in the morning, and the 5.50 back again at night, all for ten or fifteen quid a week - now that really terrify (sic.) me, far more than the thought of a few years in the nick. (Parker and Allerton 1962:88)

The same view was often expressed by my interviewees in different forms. They compared themselves to ordinary people who have time schedules and low salaries, who subordinate themselves to

employers, etc. In a question that was posed in 1978, "If you could choose now, would you prefer to live a square type of life or the one you live now?", 45% said "no", 38% "yes", and 17% said "yes and no - difficult to decide" (out of 89 respondents).

8.2. Why the squares are negatively looked upon

Table 39. "Which are the disadvantages in the lifestyle of the squares?" (%)

Difficulties in establishing contact with the squares	20
Problems with finances	35
Miss my friends	14
Miss drugs	5
Miss partying	10
Boring life, no excitement	72
N	(117)

So what are the negative features of living like the squares as experienced by the inmates? First of all, as has been seen above, the main criticism is that they find the squares' life boring: no thrills or adventures. (The way that the inmates see their own life as being more colorful will be discussed in Chapter 9.) Furthermore, criminals' picture of the ordinary man is in line with the general view of him as being much concerned with "keeping up with the Joneses".³ Part of the condescending attitude, I think, comes from the view of the Joneses as imprisoned in their way of life - that they cannot imagine anything outside their own lifestyle. Criminals want more in terms of experiences than what an ordinary life seems to offer:

"Do you enjoy having done things like that, that are a bit odd, unusual, compared to most peoples' experiences?"

"Yeah, they have fun in their way, I guess. Maybe they think back on old family stories, I don't know, but ... Maybe I want a bit more, and I do get more, living as I do."

Due to the Joneses' taken-for-granted, routine-like lives, they can even be seen to lack "hope" for something more:

I've got something that most guys, especially the Joe Squares, don't have. I've got hope! I've got the streets, and I'm going out there again. I've got something to look forward to. Joe Square has the rut, the routine, and there's no hope for him. When I get out there again I can make up for everything that is happening to me now. I'll be free, free to live the way I want and to do what I want. I can shoot dope, steal, rob, pimp whores. I can live as fast and as good as I want. (Manocchio and Dunn 1970:33)

8.2.1._ Naive and "imprisoned"

One type of criticism is that the ordinary man is sometimes said to be "naive". This, however, can also be advantageous when doing business: they will not cheat you. Some of the respondents said this in a slightly condescending tone, that they are nice, but not smart, and they are grateful:

They're good, the workers, good to do business with, never any problems. They'll pay and that's it ... they're grateful, you know, and it's nice somehow when people are grateful.

Coupled with this is the theme that the squares are also a type of prisoner, of conventional and formal rules. Being a prisoner of conventionalism is expressed in statements such as "They care so much about what others think of them." The other major theme is that they are trapped in "the system".

"I just can't see why ordinary people don't see through the system. They'll work their ass off and they'll die before re-tiring ..."

"You think that they adjust ...?"

"They are driven into a trap and then they can't get away from it. They get stuck with a family, having kids and a job, and after that, you know ..."

They are also seen as conforming, without resistance, even to clearly unfair treatment:

Of course we need laws and I'm prepared to follow them, but in

that case I want something in exchange. Because I don't think the laws are proportioned to the individual's right to live. Look at the squares, like if he wants to get drunk on Saturday night, he can get thrown in a cell, beaten by the police, and he takes it! What kind of life is that? Then you might as well be in prison. At least there are clear boundaries here, because they'll lock you up. And then you can have your Christmas when you get out ...

8.2.2._ Bad finances

Thirty-five percent of the statements about negative features in the squares' lifestyle concerned bad finances. Through low pay, bad living arrangements, etc. they are seen to be as confined as the inmates themselves.

"Of course you can get yourself a woman and kids and move out to Rosengård⁴ and get yourself a job and get stuck in one of those cells. It's a cell-system just like the prison, but you see, I'm not interested in that kind of thing. That's not happiness to me. I tried it for a while but it was only worries and bills and problems. And to have to plan your ... what in hell are you planning for? Well, it ended up planning to make ends meet."

"You planned your household finances?"

"Yeah, and that's nothing I want to keep on doing, it's crazy ... I don't think that anyone should have to live that way. I think that you should have more time left over if you're going to work and have a family. You should be better off ... If that's the way it's going to be, I think it's better just drifting around ..."

8.2.3._ Envy

Due to their restricted economy, the squares are said to be envious of each other:

"Most workers are envious of each other. If one of them has something, the other one wants the same."

"Aren't you?"

"No, you know we have the same opportunities."

Envy is at times described as the "real" reason for why the police "won't leave you alone":

I was really determined to quit, on a larger scale anyway, just having small "jobs" earning some money. But the police won't leave you alone - there's such envy: "How can you afford to go out to restaurants?", etc. ...

8.2.4. _ Lack_of_nerve

Some were of the opinion that many really wished to do what the criminals had done, if only they dared. Polsky (1969) consequently warns students dealing with deviants to be aware of their assumption that the students want to be like them, and the only thing holding them back is their lack of nerve. A young thief even generously offered to exchange jobs with an ordinary man one week at a time. The respondent decided, however, that the project would fall on the latter's being too scared:

I don't dislike them, but I feel sorry for them. They live all their life toiling and wearing themselves out, complaining about their jobs and their bosses and they never get any money, can only take a month of vacation a year ... Of course someone has to do that. Maybe one could take turns, you know, he'd be at the factory a week, and then I, one week. Nice thought but unfortunately unrealistic, maybe ... But they might not have the nerve, they get nervous just getting twelve scores [out of thirteen] in the soccer betting - it could have been thirteen (laughter).

Just dreaming about the things one wants to do is looked down upon in general:

And their talk ... the man, if you can get down to it, he always "fancies" the woman next door, but of course he never gets around to actually doing her. It's frightening, it's chronic. At least criminals have something interesting to talk about, their talk is deeper and more real, the life they lead goes at a much faster tempo and has got more excitement in it. (Parker and Allerton 1962:109)

8.3. A condescending view

Criminals are often portrayed as either really wanting deep down to become like ordinary people, or regarding them with hostility and bitterness.

McKorkle and Korn (1954) write about "a rejection of the rejectors", and Sykes and Matza (1957) have described one of the neutralizing techniques used by juvenile delinquents as "condemnation of the condemners". The authors use words like bitterness, and describe the psychological function of reversing a negative attitude: "... by attacking others, the wrongfulness of his own behavior is more easily repressed or lost to view." Cohen (1955) makes a similar conclusion in his work about the subculture of juvenile delinquents. Since they "really" want a middle class type of life, due to influences from school and the rest of society, they react with frustration and hostility to their own lower class living conditions.

I have however not found that such attitudes of bitterness and hostility are common. An attitude of superiority or condescending seems to be more accurate.

Gibbons, on thieves' attitudes towards straight people:

Thieves tend not to demonstrate hostility toward any of these individuals; instead they simply regard themselves as different from, and superior to, these others. (1968:247)

The result in the table below illustrates what is stated above.

Table 40. "What is your opinion about the ordinary working guy?" (%)

He does not dare to live, he is boring	27
He is so suspicious about everything	16
He knows so little about our life	41
He does not like people like us	25
I like him, he is okay, I guess	44
N	(122)

The most common answer is "I like him, he is okay, I guess". Many, however, after answering this added things like "It's admirable that they don't give up", "Society can't exist without them", "They've got a nice attitude - go to work and be pleased with what they've got". As I see it, they place a certain distance between themselves and the squares, and demonstrate a condescending attitude. It is thus not bitterness or expressions of frustration, as was seen in Cohen's description of juvenile delinquents.

A further support for my view, as seen in Table 41a, is that of the inmates who found it difficult to talk to ordinary people, only 6% attributed this to not liking them.

8.4. The stereotype derived from society

8.4.1. A negative view from society

The negative view of the squares is in some ways taken from other parts of society. Firstly, I think it is equaled in much of what is published in newspapers, books, etc., by "professional debaters" and authors, discussion shows on television, and so on. Also, as the criminologist Laurie Taylor (1971) has pointed out, some sociologists like Durkheim, Sorokin and Zimmerman have described "the lower class" existence in the industrial life as monotonous, and that these people are reduced to mere objects. The contrasting of criminal life as exciting and the squares' as dull thus has a societal background.

The second source of experiencing their lives as exciting and special lies in the attention that criminals get. The thieves talked, for example, about "reading the reviews" after committing a crime. Addicts, today, might get even more publicity and are seen as an even more deviant and special group than the thieves. Waldorf attributes this attention from society as one reason why addicts experience themselves as being such a special group:

Society's heavy and abiding concern and the flurry of police activity are often interpreted by the addict as evidence of heroin's importance and power. The reasoning is often thus: "If heroin is not such an important and powerful drug, why is society so concerned about it? They enact all these laws and put us in jail because they themselves are afraid of it." Being illegal, makes the drug attractive in the eyes of many, and the cat-and-mouse-game with the police, makes drug-seeking by the addict an exciting and dramatic activity ... This is, I am sure, the basis for the addict's belief that he is leading a far more different and exciting life than the square. (1973:16)

8.4.2. Romanticism

Criminals also sense that people have a somewhat romantic attitude towards those who have such an unusual life, which enhances their way of seeing themselves as leading a less boring life than the rest of us. Shover (1971) points out that this view comes from ordinary people and cites, as one proof of this, someone who claims he cannot sell goods unless people think they are stolen. By buying something illegal, people can, of course, get a feeling of being part of something that is a bit fascinating due to its secretness.

8.5. Experiencing "more" as a criminal

In everyday life the concept of 'experience' often has the connotation odd or new experience. A man or a woman is said to be experienced in the field of love, if he or she has had many relationships, as opposed to one long one, learning, maybe, different and more nuanced things.

I have argued that criminals can be seen as adventurers (Chapter 9). Simmel has pointed out that the adventurer

... makes a system of life out of his life's lack of system, when out of his inner necessity he seeks the naked, external accidents and builds them into that necessity. (1971:191)

Because they constantly live in this manner, they come to

achieve a sense of being closer to real life and experiencing more.

The way criminals regard "real life" as opposed to most people's everyday life with all its conventions has a societal background and is shared with other groups. Shils, in his book Tradition, makes the following comment:

Traditions of respectability and hypocrisy repressed "true individuality" and stood in way for life ... The "cry for life" was just not a slogan of a socialistic propagandist; it was deeper. It was a cry for an unknown object called "life" because life was held to be antithetical to custom and convention. Many less intellectuals and many less cultivated persons, too, were bored by what they received. Society seemed too cut and dried, too much the same thing ... (1981:235)

I once met a manager of a very sleazy hotel, occupied by addicts and prostitutes. Earlier, he had had a middle-class job, but quit this after a divorce. The way he looked at his present situation was in terms of wanting to get out of it, but at the same time appreciating the experiences it had given him. "I haven't learned as much during my whole life as during these two years when I've been down here in this skid-row." I find this attitude very interesting, since it is not a question of learning something in particular, i.e., the knowledge he gets under his present circumstances is something that may be difficult to translate if he returns to middle-class life. It is rather seen as a type of essential, existential knowledge of a deeper kind.

The interviewed criminals often talked about themselves as "really having lived", and having experiences, as opposed to ordinary people. I guess that the basis for this is what is discussed above, experiences that are a bit odd or unusual compared to those that most of us acquire.

An ex-criminal, about his criminal life, which he now is negative towards:

One thing that's good with such a life, if it doesn't break

you, is that you learn how to take care of yourself. Nobody picks you up if you fall ... If you fall you'll hurt yourself real bad. The experience that I now have of life and of people, that's the most precious thing I own. 'Cause it hasn't all been bad, you've learnt a lot about how it really is.

A young man's description of his view of the squares as being non-troubled and seeking perfection:

"First of all, he doesn't know anything."

"About what?"

"About the world. He kind of lives inside a shell with white inner-walls, and he scrubs and polishes them to make 'em even whiter, even more bright and shining."

The squares' work and their leisure are perceived to be equally dull. One of the inmates wanted a job and a family, but not what he saw as "square"-leisure. When I asked if he enjoyed watching TV at night, he replied:

No, I'm not interested in TV, I've never been. No, the leisure of the squares is something I couldn't take. Not if I'm going to work the whole day, then you need something else. Usually it's such monotonous work anyhow, that you need something to do afterwards.

Since many enjoyed their odd experiences and special circumstances, a life outside the criminal one might appear dull:

And I can't honestly say that I've found anything to laugh about since I became a square-john. Everything's been so serious where I used to laugh a lot. I laughed when I fooled the bulls; I laughed when I pulled a good caper; I'd laugh when I'd sit with friends of mine and talk and I was happy go lucky. But since I turned a square-john why it's been all serious. It's been fightin' to understand and do like they do and I don't know. (Chambliss and King 1972:146)

The last remark leads us to the problem of different experiences.

8.5.1. _ Different experiences

Experiencing different things does not only imply a sort of superior attitude from the inmates in that they felt that they experienced "more" but also led to difficulties in communication with the average guy. As can be seen in the table below, they emphasize that the difficulties in talking with squares

lie in not sharing the same experiences. They do not mention to the same extent that this is due to the two groups not liking each other.

Table 41. "Do you find it difficult at times to talke to ordinary people?"

	All inmates (%)
Yes, sometimes	60
No, seldom	40
Total	100
N	(138)

Table 41a. "If yes, why?"

	All inmates (%)
Difficult to find things to talk about	46
We do not share the same experiences	46
I cannot tell them about my life	31
Ordinary people do not like people like me	38
I do not like them	6
N	(72)

Table 41b. "If no, why?"

	All inmates (%)
I have learnt how to handle most kind of people	53
I am like an ordinary man myself	15
There is no big difference in talking to ordinary people or to thieves or addicts	43
N	(53)

The quote below is illustrative of the subtleties in everyday life that can be perceived as difficult if one has different outlooks on the world:

I've worked as a cab-driver, but I don't like it. They're a pain in the ass. A lot of drunks. Drunks talk, I can't take it ... the boss at the job, and the old lady at home, I don't see that as particularly interesting. It's none of my business. I'm not interested in 'em, and why should I?

This man saw himself as having been through a lot and the events of his customers, quarrelling with the boss and the wife, being drunk, etc., somehow seemed petty and definitely alien to his own concerns.⁵ The quote below is also an expression of the aspect of not sharing the same experiences:

"I find it hard to communicate with the square-johns, it's like we don't have the same interests ... we haven't experienced the same things ... If I start at a new job, I can't tell 'em 'bout my break-ins, about who I've been seeing and ..."
"So what do they speak about?"
"... Their work and their family ... my kid's got two teeth now, and stuff like that ... And the vacation last year, you know. What damn vacation?" (laugh)

The difficulties are, of course, not only practical, these different experiences also bring problems of lack of intimacy, relaxation and spontaneity.⁶

Just take you and I together here, for instance, you get acquainted with me someplace and like me, so we go out to dinner or something together and I have to keep avoiding you. See, just little tiny normal questions that you would ask another guy without any thought and he would answer without any thought. But I have to cover up so I have to continuously stay on my toes and I can't enjoy a square-john's company. (Chambliss and King 1972:76)

The author Martin recalls how he invited Gene (a thief) to his suburban home during weekends, and how Gene reacted when the author's friends dropped in:

I noticed that he was not entirely at ease around them. He had been so long away from the company of non-criminal people ... You would think him rather dull because he wouldn't be very talkative. Most of his interests involve crime and he cannot

talk crime to laymen; and as for small talk, it is a little hard to make small talk if everything reminds one of crime, as it does to him. The other day during a lull in conversation he pointed to my type-writer and said 'I know a fellow makes a living stealing them ...' (1952:5)

On the other hand, some of the interviewed expressed a wish to see people in their free time who were not criminals, since they had enough shop talk in prison. Others stated that they wanted to talk about more general things such as politics, society-related questions, etc., that their criminal friends did not know too much about.⁷

8.6. Going straight and yet not straight - the third alternative

Table 42. "What are the advantages in the lifestyle of the ordinary man?" (%)

	All inmates
You meet other kinds of people	24
Better finances	18
The family appreciates it	24
Get away from drugs	13
Get away from liquor	15
More interesting life	18
Don't have to spend time in prison	72
N	(118)

It is interesting that the only alternative in the squares' lives that really got any response was "Don't have to spend time in prison". If one considers this rather negative view, it is natural that those who want to quit, look for a third alternative - something inbetween the criminal world and the squares' world.⁸ The results of the question below show the wish for the third alternative.

Table 43. "If you are not planning to live as a criminal in the future, what type of life can you consider living?"
(%)

That of an ordinary square-john	21
Support myself legally, but not live like the square-johns	72
There is no style of life outside the criminal world that would suit me	7
Sum	100
N	(138)

What this third alternative meant, however, seemed hard to define. There was space left in the questionnaire, where they could add what they meant by "Support myself legally, but not live like the square-johns". Very few did, however, which I think mirrors the difficulty many have in envisioning something apart from the two worlds which they know about - the criminal and the square. This is interesting, I think, since we are living in a time where many alternative ways of living are made possible.

Some, however, described alternatives in the taped interviews. A young inmate spoke, for example, about a friend who worked as a delivery man whose hours were fairly free: he could take time off, smoke some pot in a park before continuing, and have free afternoons - not working 9-5. This was something the interviewee saw as a possible alternative.

The main reason for quitting crime seems to be due to a 'burning-out' effect, or that criminal life in itself can become boring. Shover (1971) noted that precisely that which was considered an advantage in the criminal world can become boring: too much leisure, too many late nights, too much gambling and entertainment, and for some, too much drugs. This, as I see it, can become just as much a routine as any other experience in any other type of life and can thus create a wish for new life

alternatives. A few quotes to illustrate:

"You said you wanted to quit because this life has become boring?"

"Yeah, I've been doing this for ten or twelve years now and then you wanna try something new. Because I've done this thing and it gets to be the same experience time after time. The same things happen, so it starts to get boring."

Another:

"Is this life exciting?"

"Yeah, it was fun a lot of times, trying, but fun at many times. Fun episodes."

"Is that a factor that makes you keep on?"

"No, no, I don't know why. It gets to be a sort of routine ..."

This young man's statement illustrates that it is often not because of moral reasons that one wants to quit, but a wish to discover "new things":

"You said you want to change your lifestyle?"

"Crime doesn't turn me off, it's far from that. But then you have to weigh pros and cons, what's most important. I'm just as criminal as I've always been, it's just that I've found more important things in life."

"What?"

"Well, you mature. You get to be interested in new things. This is really a narrow world. It's as petty as the squares'. It's the same damned talk, and the same way of being all the time. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it's the same type of people. There ain't no personal exchange."

Finally, a quote that illustrates both the importance of a third alternative and the difficulties in quitting if one does not know what to do outside criminal life:

What's the damn meaning in sitting in a place and tilting a chair? Going to the employment office, looking for jobs you hardly ever get? At best you get hold of a TV, and sit there and brood in front of it with a beer ... You need some kind of stimulation.

This guy had tried at times to get some friends (criminals) to go with him to sport events, but they had just laughed at him, because this was 'square' stuff. Since he did not have any other

friends, this effort of doing "something else" had thus not succeeded - an illustration of tiny things having a symbolic value and importance but which are still obviously so difficult.

9. REWARDS

Descriptions and analyses of criminals have often emphasized the negative features of their lives. However, in order to increase the understanding of why some people get involved with criminality and perhaps even more why they stay involved, it seems important to discuss some of the attractions of crime.

Shover (1971) believes that we know practically nothing about the rewards of crime and suggests that this might be due to a view of the deviant as forced into crime because of intense situational or structural pressure. I assume that the scholars Shover refers to are those in the theoretical school of sub-cultures. (See Persson (1981) for further discussion of this.) In contrast to those who made empirical studies of delinquent gangs, Thrasher (1927) in particular managed to describe a reality of excitement, adventure and the role of romanticism for gang boys. Bordua made this comment concerning the different types of analyses:

Thrasher's boys enjoyed themselves being chased by the police, shooting dice, skipping school, rolling drunks. - Cohen's boys and Cloward and Ohlin's boys are driven by grim economic and psychic necessity into rebellion. It seems peculiar that modern analysts have stopped assuming that 'evil' can be fun and see gang delinquency as arising only when boys are driven away from 'good'. (1961:136)

Some modern criminologists have, however, pointed to different positive aspects of a criminal lifestyle. Polsky has, for example, made the following comment on the attractiveness of crime:

Indeed, one of the most genuinely appealing things about crime to career criminals and part-timers alike - though one would hardly gather this from criminology texts - is that for most crimes the working hours are both short and flexible. (1969:103)

Nettler (1972) has, among others, written about the economic rewards which will be further discussed below.

Shover points out the psychological rewards that "the good bur-

glar" sees when he compares himself with square johns, whom he sees as the personification of the exploited and alienated industrial man. Burglars tend to view their own lives as better and even in a bit of romantic light, especially when they think about their own working experiences which often are from dull, low-paid jobs. They point out that they have free working hours, freedom from supervision and a challenging life.

Unlike the working stiff he can realize himself in his work; there is unparalleled opportunity for inventiveness and creativity; the work is challenging. (1971:124)

Some of the rewards that are discussed below can be seen as obvious and immediate, such as making a living through crime. Other aspects such as the role of secrecy, "knowing the real life", freedom and adventure might be less obvious attractions.

9.1. The money factor

Money was stated as the main advantage of a criminal life by the interviewees: 51% mentioned this. Only 13% saw "bad finances" as a drawback in their criminal lifestyle. (Tables 50 and 51) As can be expected, the major drawback in the lifestyle of the squares was seen by 35% as financial problems. (Table 39)

Lately, crime has been discussed in terms of economic rationality.¹ Nettler notes, discussing the rationality of crime as a preferred career, that many crimes against property "represent a consciously adopted way of making a living" (1978:185). The author notes further about successful thieves:

Given the low risk of penalty and the high probability of reward, given the absence of pangs of guilt and the presence of hedonistic preferences, crime is a rational occupation. (1978:186)

Mack (1972) has found that the "able criminal" actually makes more money than he would in the law-abiding occupations that would be open to him, and that his expenditures and style of

life are high by ordinary standards.

Economic rationality as discussed here was expressed in my interviews by those who argued against thieves being proud of their work skills. For the professional, who lived on crime money was the goal:

It's not the satisfaction of being able to open a safe nicely, but it's what might be in it that's important.

However, as Nettler points out, crime does not need to be successfully carried out in order to be rational. For those with small opportunities in other spheres of life, crime might be a more rewarding alternative than, say, a low-paid job or unemployment due to lack of contacts or education.

Even if you are a loser, or if you are not in the higher echelon, criminality might provide you with a better financial situation. One respondent, even though he had been rather a failure as a thief, still said, "I've never been so broke in my life as when I was working." (Shover 1971:123)

Similarly, a young addict and petty thief in my study claimed that he always had money until he quit drugs. A few of those I interviewed who had gone straight a long time before felt that the biggest problem in the beginning was that of their finances. For example, they could no longer buy a pair of stolen jeans for fifty crowns, but had to buy them at the regular price of about two hundred.

Economic rationality can also be seen in the norm of those criminals who state that if you cannot earn good money in crime, you should not be in this kind of business. Otherwise, you might as well earn your money legally.

I don't feel that it's worth stealing just to live. I can earn enough money to live. (Martin 1952:272)

One of my respondents stated the same: one should really earn more than in other types of work, given the risks of criminality. He also reflects on the long-term rationality, i.e., that in the long run, crime costs too much.

I don't like any type of work ... You can't work daytime if you're living like this ... no chance. You'll have to decide on one or the other. But if you can't support yourself on the nightshifts you might as well quit. So you should earn more really, some don't. But in a way it's always a loss, it's a lot of years down the drain, that you won't get back. But you never think about that when you're outside.

It is thus important to note that rationality, as perceived by the actor, differs in different situations. When the criminal is out of prison, surrounded by illegal opportunities which at that time look promising, crime is seen as rational. In prison, however, things might look different.

Situational factors seem to influence reversals when commitment is marginal; people change their way of life when things "are not going well" and a tempting opportunity to change develops. (Glaser 1964:77)

Glaser has shown that prisoners' careers often follow a zigzag pattern. When they get out, they often try a legitimate job and if this after some time fails or is not seen as satisfying, they return to crime.

Success, however, seemed to evoke repetition, whether in legitimate or illegitimate pursuits.

In general, success in crime seems to evoke persistence in it, but periodic failure is almost inevitable if the risk-taking involved in crime is sufficiently repeated. (Ibid:466)

Success might be especially important in the beginning of a criminal career. It might even determine whether one will continue or not:

When we started with our first robbery, if it hadn't been successful we would have probably quit. A lot of times people will hit a place and just get \$40 or \$50. We got \$200 on the first

time. (Jackson 1972:40)

Success at a "job" considered important or difficult or that one handled well by oneself, might confirm one's commitment to crime if one has previously been "drifting" (Matza 1967). The story told by an older thief about how he began with crime is illustrative. He told me how he used to hang around guys who stole when he was young, but only worked as a look-out for them. Then, he did his first job, because he was short of money at the time:

"I told my girl I'd go out for a while. And I only brought my screwdriver and bicycled to a car firm, smashed the window and I was so damn lucky ... I'd never been to the firm and go right up to the safe. I looked at it and thought 'It's nothing to bother with, with a small screwdriver.' I began to look in the desk and found the key to the safe in the upper drawer! There was 18,000 (about \$2,300) in the box!"

"Really?"

"Yeah" (laughter) "more than 18,000. Like that, it's not difficult to become a thief."

Furthermore, the successful completion of a deviant act might of course also reduce a person's doubt or fears and thus increase the possibility of repetition.

9.2. Challenges and thrills

The big disadvantage of the square-john lifestyle was that it was considered boring. Living as a criminal, on the other hand, could mean the reverse - fun, excitement, etc., not only concerning criminal acts but also in one's leisure time.

Criminals can be described more in terms of being action-seekers, ordinary people tend to be more security-seekers.

... there are many good reasons to take comfort in ... uneventfulness and seek it out, voluntarily foregoing practical gambles along with risk and opportunity ... The question is one of security. (Goffman 1967:174)

An illustration of this is the difference with which criminals

and conventional people look upon chance-taking:

Table 44. "I enjoy taking chances."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	46	32	22	100	(115)
SIFO	26	52	22	100	(125)

Taking chances is, of course, a way for the criminals to achieve challenges and thrills.

Several criminologists have pointed out that kicks and thrills are important motivating factors for juvenile delinquents (Thrasher 1927; Matza 1961). The Swedish criminologist Sarnecki has recently (1982) described illegal activities by youngsters as providing fun and exciting leisure activities.

Lofland (1969) has discussed what he calls "pleasant fearfulness" in crime. This quote is a good illustration of this concept:

"I know that when I come out I'll never take an ordinary job like the ordinary Johns, no way. I have laid on my back so much that I've got ants in my pants. You get restless."

"Can't it be tiresome to steal?"

"Well, figure for yourself, when you're doing something exciting, something you see as exciting, you wanna do that again, right?"

"Doesn't it get too exciting and make you nervous?"

"When you hear tut tut [police car sirens], and they come after you, oh, it's fun as hell, you drive all around town having those blue lights after you, around the streets. Oh, I'm criminal, you can hear that" (laughter). "Don't let any social worker listen to this ..."

It is also important that something be perceived as manageable in order to be experienced as pleasant. Lofland, about "pleasant fearfulness" in crime:

Uncertainty, unpredictability, threat, fear, frustration, anxiety, and the like, when felt to be manageable ... appear to be labelled by human beings as excitement, challenge, fun or adventure ... Circumstances providing too little of such ex-

periences are said to be boring, dull, gray or spiritless.
(1969:105) (my underlining)

This sense of something being manageable is connected to the experience of mastering something, a job or a situation. The quote below from a young thief illustrates some factors that can be described as "lures" into a criminal life and also factors that can make one remain there, such as knowing that one masters something and is someone.

"How about excitement?"

"There's a lot to that, that's right. For me, anyway. You get an outlet for many things in that way."

"Through stealing, or the whole life?"

"The stealing in itself, the act. I really liked it ... you know, that you can do something really good ... it's my thing."

"To succeed or not?"

"Yeah, succeeding ... you feel successful somehow if you make it. I guess everybody wants to experience that, one way or another ... So it wasn't only the money."

It should be added that the experience of crime as fun evidently derives from the fact that crime is crime, i.e., the act of disregarding prohibitions can in itself be a thrill. As Lofland points out, this has probably little to do with attitudes of right or wrong in the actor; it is, rather, knowing that others see these acts as wrong:

The sense of adventure probably derives, in part, from the knowledge that Others define the act as wrong, not from unequivocally believing so oneself. (1969:107)

9.2.1. _ Stealing_and_planning_of_crime

Young inmates regarded stealing itself as a thrill. A question from my study in 1978:

Table 45. "Stealing creates a kind of excitement in life."

%	Age		
	-24	25-34	35-
Agree	70	36	25
Disagree	11	38	67
No opinion	19	27	8
	100	100	100
N	(27)	(45)	(12)

Even though the numbers are small, I think the tendency of the younger thieves to see stealing as exciting is quite general.

The older inmates' appreciation of risk-taking was a bit different from that of the younger ones. Stealing in itself might not be as exciting for the experienced criminal but planning "jobs" for example could be a challenge. The older respondents seemed to view crime more in the light of business or work.

The following is a quote from a biography illustrating how crime tends to become interpreted as business as one gets older. To a question about why he became a criminal:

... I could say it was because I'd always had a desire for adventure, for living dangerously. That was true when I was young, but it isn't true now, and I still go on. Now crime's just business, that's all. (Parker and Allerton 1962:106)

This changing interpretation of their involvement in crime might be due to the fact that the experiences gained from committing criminal acts are no longer new for the older respondents.

... the adventure does not belong to the life-style of old age. The decisive point about this fact is that the adventure, in its specific nature and charm, is a form of experiencing. (Simmel 1971:197)

Crime can however still be a challenge. If the younger thieves see the act of stealing as exciting, the older ones see the

part of planning and outmastering the police as the challenge:

"Can't stealing be exciting or fun?"

"Yeah, sure. Some see it as a sport, to measure one's strength against the police's. Not the individual policeman, but the whole organization which you shouldn't underrate, their possibilities ... Jesus!"

"Can it be fun even for those of you who have kept at it for a long time?"

"Yeah, sure." (laughter) "Sure, it can be fun ..."

The calculation of risks can create a challenge. An older thief in my study:

"The excitement can be due to all that goes with it, how to weigh and act in a situation."

"Strategy?"

"Yeah, you have to have a whole system for making it ... and be very quick in situations where it's important to act."

After the challenge is met, one has an immediate sense of accomplishment, which can be said to be more than many other occupations offer. The well-known jazz musician Art Pepper describes his elation after his first successful attempt in crime:

I felt so happy. I had never felt any elation like that before. It was a feeling of power, a feeling of accomplishment. I really felt like a man. I looked at the other people on the streets and I thought, "They ain't nothing compared to me! I'm a giant! King Pepper! King Arthur! Mr. Jazz! Mr. Everything!" (Pepper 1979:232)

The sense of accomplishment that Pepper wrote about is of course related to the importance of the rewards of knowing a job, a reward that after a while becomes a sense of "being in control".²

9.2.2. Other thrills

Action-seeking seems to affect the way criminals tend to spend their leisure:

Many criminals gamble continually and heavily at horse races or in games among themselves. Con men, who might be expected to avoid dishonest gambling games often lose their money on the "other man's game" ... There is some reason to believe that a fairly close connection exists between the recreational interests of criminals and their deviant behavior. It has been shown repeatedly that there is an intimate tie between delinquent behavior and the leisure-time activities in youth. It is possible that public and supervised recreation comes to symbolize values in direct opposition to those of the habitual or professional criminal. (Lemert 1951:329)

As Lemert points out, the choice of leisure activities such as gambling or hanging out at bars or pool halls, etc. that have somewhat of a "bad" atmosphere might be of a symbolic value. In Sweden gambling clubs are illegal; this is probably why, in my opinion, many of the interviewees especially wanted to emphasize that they often went to these places - telling me they knew their whereabouts. Gambling with big amounts of money adds of course to the excitement and creates action:

We are drawn to gambling ya' know, it's like ya' stand in front of slot machines and such ... it could happen that six hundred, a thousand crowns could vanish every night ... Once I had ten thousand going in a gambling club that the cops busted later on ... I was playing on five machines at once, running from the one to the other all the time ...

In a comparison of different gambling activities, the inmates had the same results as the control group regarding some common state lotteries.³ More of the inmates gambled on roulette, bingo, pool and horses. All these, except bingo, can be seen as more attractive for the action-seeker than gambling on a state lottery.

In reply to a question whether they played cards for money, 30% of the inmates agreed that they often did this, as compared to 9% of the control group. Furthermore, a fourth of the inmates had won, lost or been in games where the stakes had been \$100-200, compared to 2% of the control group.

It can be added that the respondents described themselves as "gamblers" not only in the literal sense as described above but also in a more general way as gambling with other things

than money. This is of course connected with the appreciation of chance-taking as discussed before. This interpretation of criminals as a kind of gambler is also supported by some criminologists (Shover 1971; Maguire 1982).

However, it is not only specific leisure activities such as gambling that criminals prefer to be exciting but also the people with whom they associate.

Table 46. "I prefer friends who are exciting and do things one doesn't expect."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	52	19	29	100	(127)
SIFO	32	40	27	100	(125)

There seems to be a general wish for new experiences.

Table 47. "I enjoy eating at new, exotic restaurants."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	59	24	17	100	(127)
SIFO	39	46	16	100	(125)

9.2.3. Adventure

Connected to the gambler as a social type is the adventurer (Simmel 1971). Thieves can, I think, be described as a kind of "adventurer". The meaning of adventure implies experiencing new and perhaps unusual activities or situations. Many of the thieves talked with a certain pride about how they had done almost "everything". It seems to be the general consensus in the group that one should have experiences especially as a youngster:

When I was young I used to go bumming around during the summers.

I was a sailor for a while and worked at an amusement park for some time. Most of the time I used to hitchhike or walked the roads, even if I had money for the train fare: I preferred it, you have to try some different things ... 'Cause then you won't have to sit around when you're old telling yourself - I should have done this or that. And now I enjoy taking it easy.

As has already been pointed out, crime might take on more of a business atmosphere than one of excitement when one gets older. However, as Thrasher (1927) suggested, one can become accustomed to adventure in a more general sense and a "free life" can thus continue to be important:

The gang stimulates the boy to an even greater craving for excitement. His adolescent interest is in that which becomes reinforced by habit; ordinary business and pleasure seem tame and dull in comparison with the adventure of the gang. Habituation to this type of life in adolescence goes a long way toward explaining behaviour in the young-adult gangs and even of the hardened gangster. (1927:82-83)

The criminal who as a youngster enjoyed bumming around talked for example about how he now at the age of fifty-five had grown accustomed to his free lifestyle and did not want to change it. He had tried to live a square life but had missed the sudden business opportunities in crime which he still found exciting, as well as his leisure time. Living as a criminal (when not imprisoned), he could for example go out fishing whenever he wanted, which was his favorite pastime.

My point here is that it is not only the successful so-called professional thieves or well-known gangsters who experience the advantages in crime: also those who are often described as "petty thieves", "small-time hustlers" and addicts described by Cloward and Ohlin (1960) as "double-failures" do get rewards from crime and cannot one-sidedly be seen as victims of a world they do not wish to live in.

Suttler has formulated this nicely when he argues against viewing addicts from a middle-class perspective, explaining them as double-failures, inadequate socialization, fatalism, etc. From their own point of view - and it is naturally their per-

spective which is the valid one - their lives can be exciting, despite their mental and physical bondage to drugs:

Without understanding the romantic pull of the hustling world, the colorful life of "successful" hustlers, the sportlike challenge of the hustling games, and the nature of the illegal marketplace, it is impossible to grasp fully the nature of opiate use ... (1969:816)

9.2.4. Consequences of routinization of adventure

Adventure like everything else can reach a saturation point.⁴ Lofland refers to a "routinization of adventure" where adventure loses its quality of pleasant fear. Almost a third of the respondents stated that one of the negative features of criminal life was that it tended to get monotonous after a while.⁵ (See Table 51.)

This was why some thieves had turned to drugs - to experience something new - and some addicts who used to be on amphetamines now used heroin. A former addict:

I used to go on uppers. The reason for my using drugs was due to a drug romanticism. Well, I got used to uppers and it was nothing new so at that time I started with brown sugar and after a while I got into shooting heroin. The reason, I guess, was to get that new exciting feeling again.

Crime can cease to be exciting when for example the winning odds get too low:

It is noteworthy that ... the competition may get so rough, or one party may win so much, that occasions of engagement are no longer fun or exciting. They can become merely threatening or merely fearful or merely dull, because outcomes are too highly determinate or too highly indeterminate. (Lofland 1969:105)⁶

The former thieves I have talked to often referred to the fact that at the end of their 'careers', they got caught too easily due to their records and the time they were imprisoned tended to increase. Finally, they saw their life as one long prison

sentence only interrupted by escapes. At that time they decided to quit.

It is interesting that their new lives as straights can also be seen as containing new experiences, thus creating small adventures. An old ex-thief and I went out one afternoon to buy some plants in a big nursery. When we were in the car driving home, I asked him what he saw as the main difference between his former and current lives. He said that neither one was better but the life as a thief had been fun and exciting. But then, he added, "I never did things like this." Doing this very straight type of thing, going on a Sunday drive to buy plants, was a new type of experience - a small adventure - for him.

Even making new acquaintances, getting a new job, etc. can be a challenge, and a pleasant one if successful:

Pleasant fear can also derive from ... changes of social membership such as occur in getting a new job, getting married, joining a new group or quitting any of these. (Lofland 1969:106)

The thief referred to above told me for example with a certain degree of pride how he by different means had managed to make a new start. One way to get a new job was to explain his lack of a work record by telling his presumptive employer that he had had a business of his own. Thus, he managed to go straight by thinking and planning about several such things - something that he saw in part as a challenge. Another example of this is the man who stated that his big victory as an ex-addict was the first time he was able to walk across Gustav Adolfs Torg - a square in Malmö where addicts gather and make their deals - without stopping.

9.2.5. _ Returning to crime

However, if one fails to find new challenges from the switch to a square life, the boredom in the new life might cause one to go back. Lindesmith (1947) reports that the most common

reason that ex-addicts give for returning to drug-use is boredom.

One of the younger thieves in my study told me he had returned to his old criminal friends after sitting a week in front of the television and sipping beer, which was utterly boring.

The same attitude gave another man a reason for divorce:

I'm a bit restless ... I'm not really ready to get tied down yet [about 40 years old] ... I used to sit home and wonder where the guys were and want to be out with them, drinking, sitting, shooting the breeze ... Ya' just don't want to sit around in an apartment, twiddling your thumbs.

Even if one wants to quit, one might meet with difficulties in leaving the non-routine life that crime provides. The habit of living a shifting and adventurous life might be hard to break. An account of how a thief who had settled down gets into his old life again:

Gradually I started filling in with a group of fellas that were strictly thieves. I got mixed up with 'em just by hanging around, nothing special to do, inbetween jobs, filling in on a fast dollar here and there. After you've travelled around like I had and done a few things, it's pretty hard to settle down to a routine existence. (Martin 1952:48)

Someone in my study who is aware of the difficulty in settling down makes the following reflection:

I'm gonna start studying now and the course takes a good year or two and that's about what you need to come down again - you gotta land, get away from it - it's a must, otherwise you won't make it.

A last quote illustrates an attitude that is rather typical for older criminals, when adventure has become routine and lost its charm but the life of the square-johns is not so appealing that one wants to go straight. Often, in this situation, one sticks with that which is familiar - crime.

One man who says he has done "everything unpleasant" (with

laughter) - living with a prostitute, smuggling drugs and liquor, among other things - makes the following reflection about his life:

"You're so screwed up you don't know what to choose. Instead you try everything to see what it can give you."

"You're sort of chasing something?"

"Yeah, I guess so. We who sit here have seen so much shit. We have done too many things ... And after a while you get so tired of everything, the society and all, there's nothing that interests you. I guess one would like to have a job and a steady income but it's sort of a drag to get there ..."

"It's not enough?"

"Well, maybe it would be but we don't have that routine ... on the other hand, those who are in it might feel bad about it, but what in hell are they to do? They are stuck with loans, taxes and shit. So for them it's just a matter of clinging to what they've got."

"Are you better off in that way?"

"Yeah, I don't owe anyone anything. But that's not good or bad, maybe it's actually what's lacking ..."

"Not having any commitments?"

"Yeah, nothing that directs you."

9.3. Secrecy

Secrecy can have a positive function for an individual in that it provides him with a feeling that he experiences something more and something else than most people.

... the secret produces an immense enlargement of life: ... The secret offers, so to speak, the possibility of a second world alongside the manifest world; and the latter is decisively influenced by the former. (Simmel 1964:330)

It can also give the individual a clearer identity based on a belonging to a special group.

Secondly, secrecy has positive functions for a group. It can strengthen its ties, as well as give the group members a feeling of exclusiveness. The mere using of a forbidden drug can accomplish this:

No substance was more profoundly tabooed by convention middle-class society. Regular heroin use provides a sense of maximal

social differentiation from the "square". (Finestone 1969:792)

Here, however, I will mainly discuss the social-psychological aspects of secrecy for the individual involved with criminality.

A general fascination with secrecy seemed to exist among the interviewees. A former thief:

Inside prison there's a lot of "criminal bullshitting" about different plans what you're going to do when you get out ... schemes and stuff they give each other. But it's lies all of it. It's just to have something to talk about ... Plans and drafts that they hide or set on fire so that no one will find them ... Or codes so that the bulls won't find them. In other words, it's sort of mysterious things.

When one reveals something a bit sensitive, or secrets about one's personal life, one tends to whisper or lower one's voice.⁷ This behavior was quite usual during the interviews. When my respondents talked about drugs or different methods in selling stolen goods, for example, they seemed to feel that they revealed something, almost as a gift - a confidence of this kind is something that cannot be requested: it is given (Simmel 1964).

McKenzie notes in *Secret Society* that these secret groups have an identity-solving function for people who have felt they had few bonds with society as a whole or lacked close ties to other groups:

The individual who formerly felt exposed and vulnerable is likely to find that membership in such a group secret society gives him reassurance to the outer world. Though he may continue to live and work in that world, he no longer depends on it in the same way. He is able to withdraw from it, and to find the reciprocal confidence on which the existence of the secret society depends. This new sense of fellowship may create such powerful bonds that the member feels invulnerable to the outside world. (1967:251)

Coleman writes about identity gains, when one begins to define oneself as an addict, and gives this quote as an illustration:⁸

I never labeled myself as anything. Now I was labeling myself

as a doper. And there was a certain mystique about the whole dope culture. It set you apart and I labeled that as being something special. I liked to think of myself as being the vanguard of society. I felt I was the wave of the future and that everybody would be smoking eventually. (1975:115)

It is interesting, in this context, to note Blumer et al.'s (1967) observation - contrary to the common belief - that addicts seldom try to convert others into drug use. This, I believe, can be interpreted as due to the fact that they want to retain the feeling of being an exclusive group.

Goffman differentiates between different types of secrets. Inside secrets are described in the following way:

These are ones whose possession marks an individual as being a member of a group and helps the group feel separate and different from those individuals who are not "in the know". (1959: 142)

"Being in the know" can in itself give a feeling of superiority due to the exclusive knowledge of, say, how to open a safe or how to use different drugs. Finestone's comment on the heroin user's world:

It is the restricted extent of the distribution of drug use, the scheming and intrigue associated with underground "connections" through which drugs are obtained, the secret lore of the appreciation of the drug's effects, which give the cat the exhilaration of participating in a conspiracy. (1969:798)

Goffman also discuss another type of secret, which he calls "strategic", a secret which is used against another group in order to prevent them from hindering one's planned actions. Secrets of this type, that the inmates seemed to enjoy, were for example ways of smuggling drugs into prison. One strategy here was the use of guards who were forced into smuggling by inmates blackmailing them. The blackmail was made possible by inmates who had seen guards stealing food, clothes, etc. Through this secret knowledge, the inmates seemed to derive a feeling of revenge towards the system as well as a sense of power. A former addict, whom I spoke to, was rather upset with the guards who did things like this. He was now working with rehabilitation

and therefore visited prisons where he had formerly been an inmate himself. Sometimes he saw guards there who had smuggled drugs for him - due to his blackmailing them. With the self-righteousness of the former addict, he said that he had been thinking of revealing what they had done, because their actions had been wrong, even though he did not think they had continued with their smuggling. But he had decided that since they had families, he would not do it. The knowledge he possessed however gave him a sense of power, which he seemed to enjoy.

Strategic secrets that can also be experienced as positive are seen in situations where a thief sells to buyers who are not sure of his identity. It gives the thief a feeling of being the one who is in control. A man commenting on selling stolen goods to workers at a factory, whom he got to know quite well, but:

"You can't tell 'em too much 'cause then they might get greedy and that's no good ... They probably don't know who I am, then they might've had another attitude. But we've had a good time. I guess they look at me as the guy who can fix things, so they might believe I'm just doing it for their sake, I don't know."
(laughter)
"Santa Claus?"
"Right!"

It is interesting that the opposite situation, knowing that others know but that they cannot take action, can also evoke the same feeling of being the one who is in control. This is, for example, the case when the police know about crimes that are committed, but do not have evidence against the criminal. A few respondents said things like "the police knew about it, but couldn't do anything, you see". Letkemann (1973) notes that the criminal who sees himself as experienced, i.e., not an amateur, was more concerned about conviction than detection. As long as the police "had nothing on him it didn't matter." The fact that others know, but cannot do anything, can be seen as part of the challenge. To outwit the police in a conscious way is of course more thrilling than to just get away with it with no feed-back - especially since the police are one of the significant audiences for criminals.

Finally, one can assume that the mystique and secretness surrounding the criminal life can be beneficial for those who quit and know how to put their former identity to good use:

There is ... a sympathy bestowed upon the ex-addict that is not unlike that given to the reclaimed sinner who has changed his way and come back to the fold of society. Add to this an element of the glamor that attaches itself to men (not women) who have countered society's morals and laws, and one finds a certain mystique bestowed upon the ex-addict. (Waldorf 1973:26)

The facts that some ex-criminals partly support themselves through lectures in schools, etc., about their former life, and that biographies and auto-biographies by criminals seem to be such a lucrative business, might be explained by the fact that the secretness in itself is something attractive:

From secrecy, which shades all that is profound and significant, grows the typical error according to which everything mysterious is something important and essential. Before the unknown, man's natural impulse to idealize and his natural fearfulness cooperate toward the same goal: to enter the unknown through imagination, and to pay attention to it with an emphasis that is not usually accorded to patent reality. (Simmel 1964:333)

9.4. Independence

The importance of independence⁹ and individualism was a reoccurring theme in the interviews. Independence was seen as a value in itself and something which many stated that they achieved through being criminals - it can thus be seen as one of the rewards. The prospect of losing one's independence was seen as a problem if one planned to quit criminality. The quote below from a young thief who wanted to support himself legally in the future is an example of how he might get into trouble doing this:

"It's important with individualism?"

"That's the most important thing ... if there's no place for that I don't wanna join the game ... It's that, I guess, that's made me ... that's the reason I don't function in a society like this. Not in any society where I'm just a member of a flock, because I want to develop myself. I only live once and

it's my life and I can't put that into the hands of some big collective that won't give anything back ... just because that's the way it's supposed to be."

Chic Conwell, the thief in Sutherland's *The Professional Thief* even attributes the dependence thieves are forced into as the problem with quitting crime:

To steal a living is strictly an individual affair, in which he is not dependent upon anyone else except, perhaps, some partners. But he cannot be independent when he tries to quit stealing. (1958:188)

To work as a criminal can thus be seen as part of the claimed independence. Another is probably their marginal situation, discussed elsewhere in this work. This marginality breeds a feeling of individuality and independence from ways of living that others take for granted or follow unconsciously:

Actually, what we are prone to call 'individualism' is not so much anything that may be seen to emerge from the individual, considered as a discrete entity, but, rather, from the individual's relation to a considerable number of groups or other types of social aggregates. His power of thought, imagination, and action may be heightened by the experience of living at one and the same time on the peripheries of many groups, as well as values and themes. Not one but several social groups may be his reference groups. (Nisbet 1970:110)

Below, I will first try to describe in a more concrete way¹⁰ how the interviewees viewed autonomy. Then I will discuss how independence was valued both out of necessity and for its own sake.

9.4.1. Areas of independence

9.4.1.1. Norms and regulations

Even if many respondents stated that it was important to be independent, this was expressed with varying degrees of clarity

as to what was important in independence. Some meant, for example, that they were more independent than most people concerning general laws, rules of behavior, etc.

"What is important about independence?"

"That's difficult - you can be independent just up to a certain limit. But, of course, we can be much more independent than normal people. They are so dependent on so many other things, like how society is regulated, and following certain norms. We aren't to the same extent."

The inmates often stated that they wanted to remain free from time-schedules, installment plans, laws, etc. - to avoid regulations that are experienced as being forced on oneself by external sources:

There're so many rules around you - I guess you were just born different than most people. You just can't take that other type of life [the squares] because you'll be a prisoner in that life as well with a lot of installments and nothing left, so you have to live like a robot ... You can never choose for yourself, the guard out here, he can't choose his life, he can't leave tomorrow and be away for ten days. Even if he's a bachelor, everything would just break down if he did something like that. So you want to be independent of everything. Of course we have to have laws and I'm prepared to follow them up to a certain extent but then I want something in exchange as well, not only misery.

9.4.1.2. *Work*

In relation to work they saw an ordinary job (often equated with a factory job) as negative, implying a loss of freedom. It is important to note that it is not work in itself but the situation around work that seems to generate a feeling of subordination.

It's difficult ... I think everybody here has difficulties in subordinating himself to any sort of routine or regulated existence. They really dislike anyone who's screaming at them at a job. I would like to see any inmate here who would go to work at a factory. (laughter)

A landlady, a friend of a thief, comments on him:

Harry has a terrible chip on his shoulder against any kind of authority. He couldn't work for a boss. You show him a rule and he'll do the best to break it - except when he's inside, of course. (Crookstone 1967:90)

Even the idea of having to excuse oneself for sick leaves can imply a humiliation:

But living with square-johns is different. If I don't want to work tonight I don't see any reason why I have to go into a detailed explanation with the official out there. I just say that I don't feel like working and I lay off. But a square-john wants to get real complicated and have their wife call up and say that they are sick. You are much more your own boss when you are working as a thief. All thieves hate regimentation which is something they have to accept when they go to a penitentiary. (Chambliss and King 1972:157)

Thus, when asked why they reject work, the answers were not usually based on reasons such as that the jobs available were low-paid, low-status, etc., but centered rather on the routine of a job and the demand of applying oneself continuously. Finestone's comment on heroinists fits well with my respondents' attitudes.

The self-constraint required by work was construed as an unwarranted damper upon his love for spontaneity. The other undesirable element from his point of view was the authoritarian setting of most types of work with which he was familiar. (1969: 793)

Finestone's interpretation of the above is that of devices for sustaining "the cat's" self-conception. "The cat's feeling of superiority would be openly challenged, were he to confront certain of the social realities of his situation ..." (Ibid.) These social realities are discrimination and the types of low-status jobs that are the only ones available, and independence from these is a basic requirement that the "cats" have.

Not only a particular self-image at a given time is important, but also previous experiences. Having been under other people's supervision, such as in orphanages or prison, might of course influence a wish to decide for oneself in a work situation:

I've had a whole lot of jobs, but I've never felt good there - there's always been someone over me making the decisions. It's been that way ever since I was a kid [he had been in orphanages since he was two years old]. That means that now if someone at work wants to order me about, I do the opposite. I mean, I want to decide for myself.

The subordination they see in ordinary jobs is connected with a feeling of lack of respect connected with these jobs. This is closely correlated to what type of job one can accept in the legal market:

... the *thief* sometimes "reforms" and tries to succeed in some life within the law. Such behavior, contrary to popular notions, is quite acceptable to other members of the thief subculture, so long as the new job and position are not "anti-criminal" and do not involve regular, routine, "slave labor". (Sutherland and Cressey 1978:612)

Thus as long as these jobs are not defined as 'slave jobs', legitimate work can be accepted and even desired, if it contains 'respect':

But you can't change people like us. That's wrong to say that. I don't know - if I could get out and get me a good job, if there was some respect went with it ... I'm not going to get out and work in a service station or work in a drive-in grocery store or sell peanuts or something like that. I'm just not going to do it. I've had some good jobs in my life, but I could never get one again. I'm getting too old now ... I've got to get out and make me some money. Try to get in business for myself. (Jackson 1969:235)

9.4.1.3. *Time*

The connection of independence and time has been discussed elsewhere in this work but since this is an important and often-mentioned aspect, a few words here as well are in keeping.

One of the objections in having a 9-to-5 job was just that: 9 to 5, thereby confining one during that time-span. Three out of four inmates thus wanted to have free working hours.

The inmates considered free working hours as something self-

evident, a must. However, time and routines, as we know, structure and order the day (Berger and Luckmann 1972; Zerubavel 1981). In a study of mine (Persson 1980) among ordinary people, many expressed mixed feelings toward free working hours. In one way they saw it as preferable, but on the other hand felt it left too much to one's own initiative to "get up and go". Thinking about being a salesman instead of working at a butcher shop as he did, one of those "ordinary men" made the following reflection which I think is a quite common one for most people who are used to regulated times:

I'm afraid I would postpone the things I had to do and then be stuck with it later ... It would be nice to take off some afternoons, you can do that, in that job, but at the same time I would have a bad conscience - and no one would be around ... And it's nice the way I have it now, when I'm free, I'm free ... and I always know when I'm at work and when I'm not.

The difference between the groups is evident:

Table 48. "I seldom have specific times for doing things because I want to be free to do whatever I feel like doing."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	46	28	26	100	(112)
Control group	23	56	21	100	(196)

That one does not want to subordinate oneself to time regulations is sometimes expressed in not wanting to wait in queues. This can even lead some to steal in stores - even if this was not planned - instead of having to wait in line (see Chapter 5). This attitude is also connected to owning and driving a car regardless of whether one has a driver's licence or not.¹¹

When I asked one of the respondents what he needed when he got out, he said "a car". When I asked why, he replied that there was no way he would use the "peplemobiles" (city buses). The degrading tone in the slang word expresses somewhat his attitude

and adds to his explanation that he could not stand the waiting and queuing involved in using public transportation.

9.4.1.4. *Independence in relationships*

Most of the inmates wanted to have a steady relationship with a woman and saw this as an important factor in "getting their lives together". At the same time they did not wish to be too "tied down".

In the questionnaire given to inmates and to blue and white-collar workers (the control group), this question reflects the inmates' special attitude.

Table 49. "Even if I live with a woman I want to be able to come and go as I please, without always having to tell her where I am going and when I am coming back."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
All inmates	52	28	20	100	(116)
Thereof traditional thieves	62	24	14	100	(37)
Blue-collar workers	28	54	18	100	(105)
White-collar workers	18	69	13	100	(93)

The result is interesting especially in the discrepancy between traditional thieves and white-collar workers, which I think reflects basic differences in values: the very traditional ones as opposed to more modern (perhaps 'learned') ones, as well as in different requirements for independence.

An older thief told me about having cohabited for seven years. I asked if he had enjoyed having that kind of stable relationship with someone. His answer reflects the rather common ambivalence among the respondents concerning an ordered life versus a more spontaneous way of living:

Yeah, I enjoyed it but on the other hand I wanted my freedom ... I wanted to go out and have a drink with my buddies, but no way - if I had a bit to drink, she was cross ... I guess I wasn't mature enough to be committed to someone.

One can view this attitude in part as the old-fashioned male attitude: it is not 'manly' to sit at home with one's wife watching television at nights or helping out in the household. Quite a few felt that they appreciated if their wife or woman didn't work. They, on the other hand, should be able to tend to business outside the home without having to answer to her. An attitude of "minding your own business" in a relationship was also seen as practical. As some pointed out, if you do not tell your wife your whereabouts and your business, she is not in a position to tell the police. "What she doesn't know, won't hurt her. Or me." Social distance in itself is correlated to autonomy as Shibutani has pointed out:

... the extent to which men are autonomous or compliant depends in part upon the degree of social distance characteristically maintained from other people. (1961:314)

Most of the respondents emphasized that they maintained a distance to most people. Some called themselves "lone wolves" and this was not a negative epithet, rather, the contrary. They said this with a certain pride and pointed out that they acted according to their own wishes.

Their lifestyle in itself creates distances: they realize that they might have to pay a psychological or emotional price for becoming too attached to people, since they are aware of the fact that they might soon have to part due to a new prison sentence or to the general uncertainty and instability of their lives. An ex-thief said that his relationship with his daughter had become much closer because nowadays they could make plans for the future. Earlier, he could not do this due to possible arrests and he could thus not afford to get too fond of her.

9.4.1.5. *Independence from criminal organizations*

Popular notions notwithstanding, the basic units of a heist-mob are not a 'mastermind' and some servile morons who carry out his orders. As a matter of fact, among 'heavy' thieves no one gives orders for the good reason that no one takes them - the heavy is as independent a character as walks the earth. DeBaun 1950:72)

The self-respecting thief rejects involvement with associates who order him around. My respondents did not believe that organized crime exists in Sweden in the way that it is organized in the US (Cressey 1977) but saw some foreign gangs who specialized in illegal bars, liquor selling, drugs, etc., as a sort of counterpart. Most interviewees did not want to get involved with these since they thought that they were ruled in a too authoritarian way.

Thieves did not like addicts for many reasons. One of their main objections toward the addicts was that in drug circles, those who had drugs were seen as "kings" and those below in the hierarchy degraded themselves by flattery and letting themselves be used in different ways in order to get drugs.

King, the thief whom Chambliss wrote a biography about, had the same view of not letting any criminal organization make his decisions and he even stole from "the syndicate" - something he derived an obvious satisfaction from:

If I went to an Eastern state, I'd beat the syndicate steal from the syndicate's bars ... And I thought it was a big joke - it never did come out in the papers, you know, naturally, but that syndicate went crazy. I guess they tore half of the hoods up in Cincinnati trying to find out who did it. We did from out here. Cause we had no fear, no respect for the syndicates - heck with them, you know. (Chambliss and King 1972: 28-29)

9.4.1.6. *Drugs*

Most thieves seem to have a definite view concerning drug use vis-à-vis dependency. To become a slave to a drug is as bad

as being dependent on anything else. This might explain the contempt which one of the self-righteous criminals, for whom independence was one of the most important things in life (he proudly stated that he was independent of everyone in the legal as well as illegal world), had for addicts and pushers inside prison:

"Those who run around here selling drugs, they're clowns, they're bums, they're bastards ... They're trying to create some kind of big-shot atmosphere inside prison for a few grams of amphetamine. It's shit, to put it plainly."

"Do you feel sorry for the addicts?"

"No, they're the same kind of trash, so ... If you want to use, you should be able to take it inside yourself and keep it your own business. And in that case, people shouldn't touch you. If I bring in my own stuff and don't hurt anyone, then that's my business ..."

So, the traditional thieves try to maintain a certain dignity. Many spoke with disdain about the rushing around that occurred and the begging of money - even from them themselves who were contemptuous of addicts - when drugs had been smuggled in. "They don't act like human beings ..." As Lukes (1973) has pointed out, dignity as a value is intrinsic in the concept of individualism.

9.4.2. Independence as a necessity

Freedom or independence can be seen as having a practical function for criminals. Independence from commitments to jobs, in relationships, time-schedules, etc. allows his activity as a criminal to be optimal.

Even owning things was sometimes perceived as a commitment that could tie one down. Subsequently, some of the respondents felt that they did not want to own a new car, a boat, etc. because if they did, they had to take care of them - something that was difficult to do within the frame of their lifestyle and with the possibility or prospect of being arrested always hanging overhead. One of the interviewees said, for example, that he always rented cars, boats, and apartments instead of buying

these things because he did not want to be "tied down".

Liebow, who has written about black street-corner men, sees their situation as discouraging commitment:

Thus, the constant awareness of a future loaded with "trouble" results in a constant readiness to leave, to "make it", to "get out of town", and discourages the man from sinking roots into the world he lives in ... it discourages him from committing himself to a job, especially one whose payoffs lies in the promise of a future reward rather than in the present. In the same way, it discourages him from deep and lasting commitments to family and friends or to any other persons, places or things, since such commitments could hold him hostage, limiting his freedom of movement and thereby compromising his security which lies in that freedom. (1967:70-71)

Several studies of other groups in insecure positions, e.g., Howell's *Hard Living on Clay Street*, Anderson's *The Hobo*, and Milners' *Black Players*, show the same attitude towards independence. It might be that people who are in these situations so to say "make a virtue of necessity". This might be one reason why independence achieves a value of its own.

9.4.3. _ Independence_for_its_own_sake

Writing about personal autonomy, Shibutani notes:

The expression of one's individuality - the preservation of those distinctive habits of thought and action which characterize a man and mark him off from all others - may itself become a value. (1961:307)

In a world where formal merits are lacking and do not count very highly, one's personality and autonomy seem to achieve a special value of their own. Among the respondents, "integrity" for example was a generally valued trait. In prison this might become even more important:

Once a man has gone through the impersonal procedures necessary to processing and labeling him as a criminal and a prisoner, about all he has left in the world is his "self". No matter what that self may be, he takes elaborate steps to protect it, to

guard it, to maintain it. If it should be taken away from him, even in the name of rehabilitation or treatment, he will have lost everything. (Sutherland and Cressey 1978:558)

A convict's thoughts as he is called to the counselor:

I'll give him the response he wants each time he asks me something, but they'll never have anything to do with the way things are. (Manocchio and Dunn 1970:58)

A young thief in my study who saw himself as a lone wolf - something he had even gotten status from, by being able to steal by himself and minding his own business - explained his criminality by his wish for freedom:

"If you've ever experienced freedom you won't let anyone catch you a second time ... you look for it everywhere. I sought it in an intense criminality, that was one way, 'cause then, nobody could make demands on me or rule me. But later on it unfortunately got me to prison and here you're pretty locked up." (laughter)

"Yeah."

"Yeah ... but on the other hand it's only the body they lock in, it's not your ... thoughts ..."

Due to a quest for expressive independent acting and action in general, it might be that criminals tend to seek out situations where this can be expressed. According to Shibutani, crisis situations are of this type. He outlines certain types of situations where things go on as usual regardless of who is present and others where the presence of particular people proves important. One can view ritual situations on the one hand and crisis ones on the other as poles on a continuum. In the latter there is more room for individual expression.

When there is no conventional way of meeting the situation satisfactorily, those who are involved are thrown back on their own resources ... Crisis situations, then, provide opportunities for individual expression. (1961:300)

Since criminals more often are involved in crisis situations and rely less on routines in daily life, they certainly find more room for individual expression. So individualism is built into the criminal lifestyle and as one becomes more forced to

rely on one's own abilities and practical knowledge, this probably leads to something that one is proud of as well.

As a final comment, I think that the craving for independence found among criminals is a particularly interesting facet in that they both believe in and seek independence while at the same time must live by strict rules and constraints. One can question whether there really is less conformity among criminals. Due to several factors such as being in prison and needing contacts in their work, they are in many ways very dependent on people and circumstances. This should lead to a greater social control.

One's reputation seems to be long-lived. There are few escapes from the label "ratter" for example. One former thief and addict who presently works in a treatment center for addicts claims that his reputation of having been a "right guy" helps him in his present job. If he had been known as a "ratter" he believes that he would not have made it.

The independence claimed by the respondents, then, might more reflect a value or cultural norm, than the reality of most criminals. The criminal world seems full of rules and norms circumscribing independence. There are rules about being generous, rules about drug taking, norms about honor among thieves, etc. Yet although a lot of time is spent in prison - the destructive effect this total institution has on individuality has been thoroughly explained by Goffman - criminality is still defined as independence: "this is one of the fascinating inherent contradictions in the criminal lifestyle which gave rise to this work.

Table 50. "What types of advantages are there in living as a criminal?"

	%
You have more money (at least at times)	51
You are more independent	48
You have more freedom (outside the pen)	36
Avoid working exact hours	35
There is more excitement	33
You meet more interesting people	28
N	(92)

Note: The only difference among the groups is in the money item, which 67% of traditional thieves mention which is more than the other groups.

Table 51. "What types of disadvantages are there in living as a criminal?"

	%
Too much time in jail	50
This life is too hard	44
Your whole life revolves around just getting money all the time	39
You're not accepted by society	36
It's hard to build a family	29
Monotonous in the long run	28
Too much drugs	28
Too much alcohol	22
Too much violence	15
Bad finances	13
N	(116)

SUMMARY

The present study is an attempt to reconstruct criminals' - especially thieves' - attitudes and lifestyle. The subject does not lend itself to a logical sequence of chapters or build-up; therefore, the topics of the chapters can be seen as more or less independent articles comparing criminals to ordinary people in various areas of interest. There are some themes that are repeated, however, such as criminals as action-seekers (Goffman 1969) and as marginal men.

The empirical material was collected through taped unstructured interviews and questionnaires, mostly with prison inmates but also with criminals and former criminals outside jail. Since I wanted to make a comparison with ordinary people, I also distributed an abbreviated questionnaire to blue and white-collar workers at a factory, Alfa-Laval, in Lund. Furthermore, Professor H.L. Zetterberg agreed to let me use data from SIFO (The Swedish Institute of Public Opinion Research) concerning a life-style study among the Swedish population.

Several scholars have written about crime as work and have perhaps over-emphasized the professionalism involved for example in being a thief or a drug dealer. Most of the interviewed persons in this study had had ordinary lawful jobs as well as illegal ones. They tended to view crime both as work and non-work, i.e., crime is usually not seen as an occupation per se.

The inmates stated however certain necessary conditions if one were to be able to support oneself through crime: the importance of having "nerve" and of "keeping one's cool" in stressful situations rather than skills in the craftsmanship of crime. They also stated that crime as work was a very arduous way of making money. An interesting and a bit neglected feature involved is the necessity for the active acquisition of knowledge and for creativity: I say neglected because too much emphasis has been placed on a tutelage process, so that learning crime has, perhaps, come to be viewed as non-complicated. According

to my respondents, learning through older or more experienced criminals was not enough: they had also relied a great deal on their own initiative, ideas, and so on to make contacts, to think up new crimes, etc. It is important to note this active use of ingenuity and knowledge in order to understand the pride felt by many of the criminals for having gotten by. It is also important, I think, to appreciate that knowledge of crime, as any other type of knowledge, can be viewed as an investment from the actors' point of view.

To lead a criminal life involves beating the system not only in connection with criminal activities. Certain strategies are therefore developed in order to keep a front vis-à-vis the police, social workers, etc. These strategies can be seen as both instrumental and symbolic. The first is exemplified in cases such as when using one's criminal identity in order to take advantage of prisoner organizations or to stay unemployed, by referring to one's past if there is a risk of being given a job. There are also strategies of manipulating different rehabilitation efforts by officials. The symbolic value of beating the system is seen in its giving a sense of control over one's own life - to win over the system as an individual.

Crime is not only seen as a kind of work, it is also defined by many criminals as business. To be a thief was for example often referred to as "being one's own boss". Crime actually shares some of the characteristics of the legal business world. Thieves need, for example, to know the demands of the market and drug dealers must collect some investment money. Furthermore, many of the respondents claimed that one could work oneself up in a world characterized by rough competition. The respondents did not dream about a mafia type of organized business, however. They preferred their business of crime to be small and manageable, which allowed them to remain independent and keep control. They did not see crime only as business but also wanted - if they were going straight - to have a business type of occupation. They were in fact more positive to having a business of their own than the control group. The inmates had also owned small businesses to a larger extent than had the

comparison sample. The wish to have a business and the tendency of criminals to look at themselves as businessmen was explained by their wanting to remain free from the constraints of 9-5 jobs, which the interviewees looked very negatively upon. Furthermore, it seemed as if the special type of businessman they wanted to be was the one who lived an action-filled life where fast decisions and sudden wealth were the motivations. Action per se seemed to be a gratification, rather than acquiring status and success in society in general, as the innovators that Merton portrayed.

Criminals have often been described as using different techniques for denial of responsibility (Sykes and Matza 1957). I found, however, that thieves to a higher degree than the control group stated that it was one's own fault if one became criminal. The control group on the other hand placed greater emphasis on upbringing in explaining why someone becomes a criminal. It seems as if ordinary people have learned to apply the kind of sociological and psychological explanations of criminality available through the mass media.

Thieves do not only claim individual responsibility concerning why they themselves have been criminals but they also seem to have a general negative attitude towards determinism. Very few agreed, for example, to the statement "Once a thief, always a thief". All inmates - also addicts - believe furthermore that it is up to the individual if he is to quit crime or drugs. This is, as I see it, not only due to a value-based individualism but partly a realistic attitude. An unshakable determination to go straight is, perhaps, necessary if they are to succeed in the struggle of changing their lives. They often lack safety-nets, family, education, work experience, etc. as help along the way when they try to leave criminality. It is in fact to a large degree up to them themselves if they will make it as lawful citizens. The thieves also thought that they should take the consequences of their criminality. They stated, for example, that it was their own fault if they got caught; it was not due to bad company or the skills of the police as much as their own clumsiness, lack of planning, etc. The same

tendency for taking the consequences is seen in the readiness that many showed for accepting prison sentences as a price for one's criminality.

Two factors seem to be connected to this sense of individualistic responsibility among thieves. They claim that once you are a grown-up, you are and should be able to make your own decisions and take the consequences for your choices. The second factor is that thieves often have old-fashioned ideals of manliness. This is evident for example in that they more often than the control group think that it is the man who should support the family.

I discuss three possible reasons for this individualistic morality among thieves. The first is that it is functional for the group if the individual takes the blame upon himself. The second is that they tend to see themselves as the action-seekers that Goffman has described. Doing this implies a view of oneself as voluntarily choosing, taking responsibility for one's actions and showing "character" in case one's projects fail. The third is that I see criminals as "marginal men", i.e., having lived and identified themselves with several cultures. For people in marginal positions, choices are not uncomplicated but need to be thought about and weighed and are therefore taken in a more conscious way than for those who live in more "taken-for-granted" worlds. As I see it, this produces a rather existentialistic attitude towards one's own actions.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the time perspective among criminals. Criminologists have often considered criminals as being oriented to the present. In my opinion, this view gives a simplified and partially misleading picture. Because of the nature of the criminal world, criminals are forced to make fast decisions, vital for their future. Furthermore, "hanging around" is necessary in order for them to take advantage of opportunities that may suddenly arise. Criminals often demand more independence than most other groups and thus more manipulative time for themselves. Finally, it is argued that a special kind of constant orientation to the future is more common among groups that lead an

irregular, unpredictable life.

I have tried to alter somewhat the view of criminals as denying responsibility and as hedonistically present-oriented. There is yet another belief about criminals that has been criticized here, namely that of them being socially unskilled. Not only con men but thieves, addicts, prostitutes, etc. need social skills in order for example to make an identification of other crooks, customers, undercover police, and so on. To do this they have to learn to size up people, develop a sense of whom to trust. Furthermore, they need to hide their own identity in some situations. This forces them to develop skills in "passing" and "appearing normal". Criminals are also more dependent on contacts than on formal merits, which leads to skills in managing people. Yet another reason for social skills is their marginal position. They have lived in different worlds and are quite aware of differences between people in values, behavior, etc.

The attainment of money was a common explanation among the respondents as to why they lead a criminal life. Money seems to be viewed in a slightly different way than among the control group, however. Firstly, many stated that they only wanted "enough" to get by with - but this could mean quite a lot if one compared it with most people's spending abilities. Inmates also described themselves as spendthrifts. They stated that money did not, and should not, mean a lot. They looked down on those who could not see money as a medium purely for buying things and they argued that money should be used, not kept or saved. At the same time those criminals who had money were viewed with respect. Furthermore, big spending seemed to be used as a means to show off. Simmel's article, *The Miser and the Spendthrift*, is helpful in explaining this somewhat contradictory way of looking at money, i.e., that it is supposed to not matter as well as having great importance. Since criminals described themselves as spendthrifts, I was surprised by the repetitive talk about the subject of money. Simmel argues however that spendthrifts are really as interested in money as the miser: it is just hidden under a man-of-the-world attitude. The fasci-

nation with money is expressed in the spending itself; i.e., the interest is not placed on the objects acquired.

The respondents often compared themselves with the squares. The reason for this was that this latter lifestyle was seen as the alternative to the criminal one. The alternative however was not seen as an attractive one. The only advantage in the lifestyle of the squares that the majority of inmates agreed on was the absence of time spent in prison. The main criticism against the squares' lifestyle was that it was considered boring. Conventional people were furthermore looked upon as being naive, as imprisoned by society's rules and regulations, having bad finances and as envious. It is interesting that this view has its counterpart in the opinion many other groups, such as intellectuals, "professional debaters", etc., have of common people. The inmates did however not seem to be bitter or hostile towards squares, as is sometimes assumed. Instead they seemed to have a condescending attitude towards them, which was reflected in the fact that many thought they were "okay" but added things like "admirable that they can stand it" or "society can't make it without them". This rather distanced attitude was not totally uncomplicated however. The respondents had lived a lawful life at times, associated with conventional people and thus knew personally of the problems concerning understanding between themselves and the squares. These difficulties arose primarily from a difference in experiences which could make for uneasiness both in understanding in a general sense as well as in simple conversation. The experiences that criminals had were, however, said to be more "real" and interesting than those of the squares. This also seems to have a societal background in that we interpret "experiences" as something that is connected with things of an unusual or odd character.

The negative view towards the squares' lifestyle made most respondents state that if they went straight, they would find a way to support themselves legally but not live like the squares. What was meant by this statement, however, seemed hard to define. Maybe this difficulty in picturing something different from a criminal or a square lifestyle is one of the reasons why

it seems so problematic to "go legal".

When I began to interview inmates, I was struck by the emphasis placed on the positive sides of a criminal life. Due to this as well as the more common reports of the dull and depressing facts of their situation, I decided to include a chapter on "rewards". Some of these attractions are pretty obvious, such as the economic aspect. At least in a limited time perspective, crime can be lucrative. Another rather evident facet of criminality is that it can be exciting, adventurous and filled with thrills. Since criminals can be described as action-seekers, this is obviously a rewarding factor. A third characteristic of a criminal lifestyle is that it is secret, which in itself gives it a certain amount of fascination. Finally, independence is discussed since this so often was stated as important by the interviewees and thus given a value of its own. Freedom could be found in a criminal life through avoiding rules and regulations in society and by having free work hours. There seemed to be a higher general demand for independence. Even in relationships with women, thieves wanted to be able to come and go as they wished. In this respect they differed quite a lot from the control group.

The real freedom seekers among the thieves also emphasized that one should remain independent from criminal organizations as well as from drugs. It is interesting that this high demand for independence and search for freedom is so accentuated in a group - criminality as such is sometimes explained as a wish for independence - which, in many ways is so restricted. Someone remarked for example on the contradiction that he was in prison although he had described himself as being a freedom-seeker, and said that even if they locked him up, they could not take his thoughts away. In this sense independence as such acquires a value of its own. Not only prison however limits the individuality among this group. It is such a small group, so special, and relying so much on informal communication that the social control and pressure might be greater than in many other groups. This should of course have a strong moderating influence on independent actions and thoughts. These somehow contradictory

facts about criminals - their craving freedom and stating that they are more independent than other groups while at the same time being severely limited in these respects - are however one of the things that I have found interesting in the present study.

Introduction

1. The interested reader can be referred to Sutherland's and Cressey's, *Principles of Criminology* (1978) or Nettler's, *Explaining Crime* (1978).
2. For an overview of the concept, see for example *Rationality*, ed. Wilson, Bryan R., Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1970.

Chapter 1.

1. For a critique of general criminological causality research, see Walker (1977) *Behavior and Misbehavior*.
2. Shover (1971) equated the burglary skills with skilled manual trades. Gould (1968) notes that crime today is at best a semi-skilled occupation.
3. For similar conclusions, see Irwin (1980) and Shover (1971).
4. The other alternatives were mentioned in the following order: "Someone who helps others" (31%), "Someone who lives like the squares but supports himself through criminality" (25%), "Someone who is sharp and keeps his head, who sees through society" (24%), "Someone who is skillful in supporting himself through stealing, robbery, fencing, etc. (someone who always has money)" (17%), "Someone who has a lot of drugs" (14%), "Someone who carries off clever, bold sobs and dares to take chances" (14%), "One who keeps to himself and manages by himself" (13%), "Someone who is tough and does not give in to other people" (8%), "One who's not afraid to open his trap, who can jive (trick or convince others so that he himself gains)" (6%), "Someone who does crazy things and doesn't care for conventions, who 'does his own thing'" (5%).

Chapter 2.

1. See Goffman (1961) for numerous examples from the life in mental hospitals, and Crozier and Friedberg (1980) on the importance of beating the system from the actor's point of view in extending his 'margin of liberty'.
2. See also Strömstedt, L. (1982) *Gå i Fängelse* (Go to Jail).

Chapter 3.

1. The category "agree" is here a composite of two alternatives in the questionnaire, "agree strongly" and "agree". The same is done with the category "disagree".
2. The percentage is highest for the traditional thieves, 32%, and lowest for the mixed category, 15%, on having had a legal business.
3. Cf. Tham (1979:130), where he shows that 9.4% of all those noted in official records for criminality had had or had a small business, as compared to 6.9% of the total population in Sweden.
4. In Sweden, a certain sum of money is given to each inmate upon release, to help him get on his feet.
5. Cf. Adler and Adler (1980) for drug dealers, on the conflict of keeping their business secret and at the same time wanting to show off successful dealing by for example being involved with the "fast life".

Chapter 4.

1. Laziness seems to have a special connotation here. See the chapter "Crime as Work".
2. Cf. Tham (1979).
3. For more of this type of description of addicts as non-re-treatists, see Sutter (1969, 1972) and Preble (1969).
4. In the foreword of Parker and Allerton (1962).
5. For further discussion, see Persson, M. (1980).
6. The classic account of the concept is Goffman's *Stigma* (1961). See Bondeson (1974:284-300) for a discussion concerning prisons.
7. McCoy, J., *Concrete Mama*, Univ. of Miss. Press, Columbia, 1982, as quoted in *The NY Times Book Review*, April, 1982.
8. Scheff and Goffman, for example, have described the ways in which staff at mental institutions have used therapy as a means of power. Tyranny of therapy is here seen, for example, in the "mirroring effect", i.e., that everything the patient says is interpreted as a sign of his sickness. Thus there are few ways to make himself heard or seen as a human being capable of reasoning. He is thus relegated to something less than human or, rather adult: he is seen as a child. That grown-ups who do not want this identity react

to it when it is applied to them is quite understandable.

9. In general, many attempts to change someone's personality or specific attitudes will be seen as a personal attack from which one tries to defend oneself.
For further illustrations see, for example, Jack Brehm's theory of reactance: "the perception that a communication is attempting to influence will tend to be seen as a threat to one's freedom to decide for oneself." (Brehm, *A Theory of Psychological Reactance*, New York: Academic, (1966:94)
10. In a personal communication 1982.
11. I am not arguing that ratting does not occur, only that the norm against it is at least restrictive.
12. Shover (1971) compares "the good burglar" he studied with gamblers, Prus and Irwin (1980) see action as one part of "rounding as a way of life". (Rounder: thief or hustler)
13. For a theoretical statement on this, see Lofland (1969) and for empirical results, see West (1974).
14. For similar results, see Glaser (1964:475)
15. Holzman (1979) has described the burglars and robbers he studied as moonshining in crime, since crime was their secondary income rather than their first.
16. See Empey's comment in Manocchio (1970).

Chapter 5.

1. The data have been obtained from Zetterberg's study *Arbete, Livsstil och Motivation* (Work, Lifestyle and Motivation) (1977). The statistics given here, however, derive from my own calculations based on his material, since Professor Zetterberg has kindly permitted me to use his original data file.
2. Many scholars, e.g. Corrigan (1976), Hannerz (1969) and Whyte (1943), have written about the socializing aspect of hanging out on street corners, etc. Though this is an important aspect, especially considering the learning of criminal knowledge as noted by Sutherland (1958), this article deals mainly with the practical aspects of 'hanging out' and thus being available for both arising opportunities and for strategic people (such as customers, fences, etc.)
3. There are naturally different ways of waiting and making oneself accessible. The availability of the established fence can be compared to that of a veterinary surgeon or doctor on duty. The fence described by Klockars had, however, even succeeded in minimizing this aspect of work.

Three years ago, when he was younger and healthier, thieves and drivers would come by at all hours with merchandise ... I've stopped that bullshit now, but a couple a years ago it was murder. Twelve, one, two, three o'clock in the morning the door bell would ring. I cut the bell wire and they'd bang on the door and throw pebbles up at my window. That's the business. It never stops. (1974:72)

See Shover, 'The Social Organization of Burglary', *Social Problems* (1972) for a discussion of the same phenomenon.

4. S-A. Månsson and S. Larsson (1976).
5. For a discussion about the increased use of narcotics among Swedish criminals, see Persson (1978, 1980). Gale Miller (1978) argues that a general de-professionalization is occurring in various deviant occupations.
6. This is not to argue against the known socialization into the criminal subculture that exists in prison, simply that in a time-perspective those jailed get a respite from the action on the street; the action in the criminal subculture outside the prison.
7. See for example Taylor et al. (1973).
8. Perhaps the relevant sociological concept of a time-perspective among criminals would be that of a 'cyclic perspective'. This term has been applied by Calkins when describing patients at a mental hospital "... in this perspective time moves in a cyclic fashion from turning point to turning point or from crisis to crisis ... The points comprise highlights of experience as defined by the actor. Time is fragmented and chaotic as compared to the orderly continuum of the precise mechanistic perspective." (1970:490). She refers to the anthropologist Wax, who introduced the term 'cyclic perspective' to illustrate the conception of time among primitive tribes (Wax, M., 'The Notions of Nature, Man and Time of Hunting People', *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, Vol. 26, (1962:173-186)).

Chapter 6.

1. See Stonequist (1937:184-200) about how light blacks passed as whites.
2. In Bondeson's (1974) study, as many as 69% of the inmates answered that they believed that "few" or "no one" could see or otherwise tell that an individual had been in prison.
3. Lofland (1976:55) has also pointed out that underdogs will develop a self with a dramaturgic quality since the powerful by definition can punish or reward them. They thus develop a consciousness of how they can manipulate others.

4. The bar he describes was actually studied by Roebuck and Frese, *The Rendezvous*, Free Press, New York, (1976).
5. Cf. McIntosh (1971).
6. The distinction between addicts and hash smokers was added after the test interviews, since some of the respondents were confused about what I meant by "addicts". They would say things like, "I can't stand addicts" after having stated that hash was the best drug to use. The category "others" includes "hip people who make art", "businessmen", "poker players", and "alcoholics", who fit in between the criminal and the more conventional.
7. Bondeson (1974) shows for example that those who used criminal argot the most, got tattoos, etc., were the youth and the girls. Neither of these groups belongs to the core of the criminal subculture and might thus need the argot and tattoos more than others as expressive devices.
8. Cf. Goffman (1961) on prison as a total institution.

Chapter 7.

1. See for example Zetterberg (1966).
2. Cf. Taylor et al. (1973).
3. Christie (1968) has commented on the anti-consumption theme in the marijuana-smoking lifestyle. Quite a lot of the pot users in my study seemed to be influenced by this ideology.
4. An illustration of the need to plan one's budget among "ordinary people" versus the lack of this need among criminals is, I think, this result:

"Before I go out shopping, I make a shopping-list."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
All inmates	21	64	15	100	(127)
SIFO	58	33	9	100	(125)

Chapter 8.

1. Kelly (1966) from an unpublished manuscript quoted in Banister and Mair (1968:45).

2. See Footnote 4 in Chapter 1 for an account of the other alternatives to this question.
3. For a critique of the reality behind this commonly held view, see Whyte (1956) and Seltzer (1977).
4. Suburban area consisting of a lot of rather recently-built apartment-houses - the area is considered a "problem area" by the press; many of the inhabitants, however, seem to like it. He is thus showing a bit of the same prejudices as intellectuals and "professional debaters".
5. Since criminals are accustomed to taking risks in an action-filled life, this might also lead to a somewhat non-understanding attitude towards the concerns of those one sees as the ordinary people. Goffman comments on how action is perceived differently:

.... different individuals and groups have somewhat different personal base-lines from which to measure risk and opportunity; a way of life involving much risk may cause the individual to give little weight to a risk that someone else might find forbidding. (1967:157-158)
6. For a discussion, see Burns (1955) on "cliques" and "cabals" as a protection against one's larger insecure surroundings. Not only in an instrumental sense, but they function also as possibilities for intimacy and spontaneous actions.
7. Cf. Parker and Allerton (1962), where the thief states that he feels more at home among his criminal friends, but that he misses conversations about art, literature, politics, etc.
8. See Irwin's (1970) description of "styles of doing all right", for similar conclusions.

Chapter 9.

1. Gary Becker (1968) is seen as the first who made an attempt to apply modern economic analysis to crime. For a general article dealing with this area see Warren (1978) and Nettler (1978:172-205).
2. Cf. Pryce, who sees the importance for the West Indian hustlers in England that he studied of being in control of their local scene:

The hustle, for the hustler, makes up for all the intrinsic and extrinsic deprivation of work. Whatever else the hustle might be, judged from the reference position of the dominant society, it is certainly not a deprivation. It restores the hustler's sense of pride and his feeling of mastery and autonomy. He is in control again. (1979:68)

3. "Tipset", "Penning- och Bellmanlotteriet", "Lotto".
4. See Asplund (1967).
5. It is interesting that most of the 28% who found a criminal life monotonous belonged to the younger group of interviewees. I think this is due to the fact that they are so involved in their criminal life, associate more with other criminals and so on. Maybe this experience of criminal life being not so great after a while is due to the rather low average age of criminals. Perhaps those who continue with crime come to interpret their criminal activities more as business than adventure.
6. See also Whyte, *Money and Motivation* (1955), relating to factory work on experiences of challenges, being in control and loosing this control according to different circumstances.
7. Cf. Zerubavel (1982).
8. See also Proctor, M. (1971).
9. See Lukes, S. for a thorough discussion of the concept.
10. I tried to use some general questions to measure independence. I did not get very great differences in answers between the inmates and control groups however. It can generally be stated that the answers to questions that are too broad or general, especially if they are slightly hypothetical, do not differ greatly. This can illustrate the risk one takes if using this type of question, especially when they are directed to groups with such different frames of reference. This of course also implies great difficulties in interpreting the results.

However, when I used very concrete questions, I got considerable differences between the groups. The question for example, about whether one wanted to be able to leave home without telling one's wife when one was coming back can serve as an example: 62% of the traditional thieves wanted this type of independence in their relationships while only 18% of the white collar workers agreed that this was important. (See Table 49) A couple of other questions can also serve as examples of what I interpret as an almost programmatic aspiration for independence among inmates:

"When I am going by car I always fasten the safety belt."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	29	58	12	100	(114)
Control group	84	14	3	100	(198)
SIFO	73	23	4	100	(125)

"It does not matter if you do not pay your TV license."

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Sum	N
Inmates	46	23	31	100 (113)	
SIFO	8	84	8	100 (125)	

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